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K. MARX
F. ENGELS
J. V. STALIN
MAO ZEDONG
R. LUXEMBURG
HO CHI MINH
L. SHAOQI

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Principles of Communism

by Friedrich Engels, 1847

1. What is Communism?
Communism is the doctrine of the conditions of the liberation of the proletariat.

2. What is the proletariat?
The proletariat is that class in society which lives entirely from the sale of its labor and does not draw profit from any kind of capital; whose weal and woe, whose life and death, whose sole existence depends on the demand for labor – hence, on the changing state of business, on the vagaries of unbridled competition. The proletariat, or the class of proletarians, is, in a word, the working class of the 19th century. [1]

3. Proletarians, then, have not always existed?
No. There have always been poor and working classes; and the working class have mostly been poor. But there have not always been workers and poor people living under conditions as they are today; in other words, there have not always been proletarians, any more than there has always been free unbridled competitions.

4. How did the proletariat originate?
The Proletariat originated in the industrial revolution, which took place in England in the last half of the last (18th) century, and which has since then been repeated in all the civilized countries of the world.

This industrial revolution was precipitated by the discovery of the steam engine, various spinning machines, the mechanical loom, and a whole series of other mechanical devices. These machines, which were very expensive and hence could be bought only by big capitalists, altered the whole mode of production and displaced the former workers, because the machines turned out cheaper and better commodities than the workers could produce with their inefficient spinning wheels and handlooms. The machines delivered industry wholly into the hands of the big capitalists and rendered

entirely worthless the meager property of the workers (tools, looms, etc.). The result was that the capitalists soon had everything in their hands and nothing remained to the workers. This marked the introduction of the factory system into the textile industry.

Once the impulse to the introduction of machinery and the factory system had been given, this system spread quickly to all other branches of industry, especially cloth- and book-printing, pottery, and the metal industries.

Labor was more and more divided among the individual workers so that the worker who previously had done a complete piece of work now did only a part of that piece. This division of labor made it possible to produce things faster and cheaper. It reduced the activity of the individual worker to simple, endlessly repeated mechanical motions which could be performed not only as well but much better by a machine. In this way, all these industries fell, one after another, under the dominance of steam, machinery, and the factory system, just as spinning and weaving had already done.

But at the same time, they also fell into the hands of big capitalists, and their workers were deprived of whatever independence remained to them. Gradually, not only genuine manufacture but also handicrafts came within the province of the factory system as big capitalists increasingly displaced the small master craftsmen by setting up huge workshops, which saved many expenses and permitted an elaborate division of labor.

This is how it has come about that in civilized countries at the present time nearly all kinds of labor are performed in factories – and, in nearly all branches of work, handicrafts and manufacture have been superseded. This process has, to an ever greater degree, ruined the old middle class, especially the small handicraftsmen; it has entirely transformed the condition of the workers; and two new classes have been created which are gradually swallowing up all the others. These are:

(1) The class of big capitalists, who, in all civilized countries, are already in almost exclusive possession of all the means of subsistence and of the instruments (machines, factories) and materials necessary for the production of the means of subsistence. This is the bourgeois class, or the bourgeoisie.
(2) The class of the wholly propertyless, who are obliged to sell their labor to the bourgeoisie in order to get, in exchange, the means of subsistence for

their support. This is called the class of proletarians, or the proletariat.

5. Under what conditions does this sale of the labor of the proletarians to the bourgeoisie take place?

Labor is a commodity, like any other, and its price is therefore determined by exactly the same laws that apply to other commodities. In a regime of big industry or of free competition – as we shall see, the two come to the same thing – the price of a commodity is, on the average, always equal to its cost of production. Hence, the price of labor is also equal to the cost of production of labor.

But, the costs of production of labor consist of precisely the quantity of means of subsistence necessary to enable the worker to continue working, and to prevent the working class from dying out. The worker will therefore get no more for his labor than is necessary for this purpose; the price of labor, or the wage, will, in other words, be the lowest, the minimum, required for the maintenance of life.

However, since business is sometimes better and sometimes worse, it follows that the worker sometimes gets more and sometimes gets less for his commodities. But, again, just as the industrialist, on the average of good times and bad, gets no more and no less for his commodities than what they cost, similarly on the average the worker gets no more and no less than his minimum.

This economic law of wages operates the more strictly the greater the degree to which big industry has taken possession of all branches of production.

6. What working classes were there before the industrial revolution?

The working classes have always, according to the different stages of development of society, lived in different circumstances and had different relations to the owning and ruling classes.

In antiquity, the workers were the slaves of the owners, just as they still are in many backward countries and even in the southern part of the United States.

In the Middle Ages, they were the serfs of the land-owning nobility, as they still are in Hungary, Poland, and Russia. In the Middle Ages, and indeed

right up to the industrial revolution, there were also journeymen in the cities who worked in the service of petty bourgeois masters. Gradually, as manufacture developed, these journeymen became manufacturing workers who were even then employed by larger capitalists.

7. In what way do proletarians differ from slaves?

The slave is sold once and for all; the proletarian must sell himself daily and hourly.

The individual slave, property of one master, is assured an existence, however miserable it may be, because of the master's interest. The individual proletarian, property as it were of the entire bourgeois class which buys his labor only when someone has need of it, has no secure existence. This existence is assured only to the class as a whole.

The slave is outside competition; the proletarian is in it and experiences all its vagaries.

The slave counts as a thing, not as a member of society. Thus, the slave can have a better existence than the proletarian, while the proletarian belongs to a higher stage of social development and, himself, stands on a higher social level than the slave.

The slave frees himself when, of all the relations of private property, he abolishes only the relation of slavery and thereby becomes a proletarian; the proletarian can free himself only by abolishing private property in general.

8. In what way do proletarians differ from serfs?

The serf possesses and uses an instrument of production, a piece of land, in exchange for which he gives up a part of his product or part of the services of his labor.

The proletarian works with the instruments of production of another, for the account of this other, in exchange for a part of the product.

The serf gives up, the proletarian receives. The serf has an assured existence, the proletarian has not. The serf is outside competition, the proletarian is in it.

The serf liberates himself in one of three ways: either he runs away to the city and there becomes a handicraftsman; or, instead of products and

services, he gives money to his lord and thereby becomes a free tenant; or he overthrows his feudal lord and himself becomes a property owner. In short, by one route or another, he gets into the owning class and enters into competition. The proletarian liberates himself by abolishing competition, private property, and all class differences.

9. In what way do proletarians differ from handicraftsmen?

In contrast to the proletarian, the so-called handicraftsman, as he still existed almost everywhere in the past (eighteenth) century and still exists here and there at present, is a proletarian at most temporarily. His goal is to acquire capital himself wherewith to exploit other workers. He can often achieve this goal where guilds still exist or where freedom from guild restrictions has not yet led to the introduction of factory-style methods into the crafts nor yet to fierce competition. But as soon as the factory system has been introduced into the crafts and competition flourishes fully, this perspective dwindles away and the handicraftsman becomes more and more a proletarian. The handicraftsman therefore frees himself by becoming either bourgeois or entering the middle class in general, or becoming a proletarian because of competition (as is now more often the case). In which case he can free himself by joining the proletarian movement, i.e., the more or less communist movement. [2]

10. In what way do proletarians differ from manufacturing workers?

The manufacturing worker of the 16th to the 18th centuries still had, with but few exceptions, an instrument of production in his own possession – his loom, the family spinning wheel, a little plot of land which he cultivated in his spare time. The proletarian has none of these things.

The manufacturing worker almost always lives in the countryside and in a more or less patriarchal relation to his landlord or employer; the proletarian lives, for the most part, in the city and his relation to his employer is purely a cash relation.

The manufacturing worker is torn out of his patriarchal relation by big industry, loses whatever property he still has, and in this way becomes a proletarian.

11. What were the immediate consequences of the industrial revolution and of the division of society into bourgeoisie and proletariat?

First, the lower and lower prices of industrial products brought about by machine labor totally destroyed, in all countries of the world, the old system of manufacture or industry based upon hand labor.

In this way, all semi-barbarian countries, which had hitherto been more or less strangers to historical development, and whose industry had been based on manufacture, were violently forced out of their isolation. They bought the cheaper commodities of the English and allowed their own manufacturing workers to be ruined. Countries which had known no progress for thousands of years – for example, India – were thoroughly revolutionized, and even China is now on the way to a revolution.

We have come to the point where a new machine invented in England deprives millions of Chinese workers of their livelihood within a year's time.

In this way, big industry has brought all the people of the Earth into contact with each other, has merged all local markets into one world market, has spread civilization and progress everywhere and has thus ensured that whatever happens in civilized countries will have repercussions in all other countries.

It follows that if the workers in England or France now liberate themselves, this must set off revolution in all other countries – revolutions which, sooner or later, must accomplish the liberation of their respective working class.

Second, wherever big industries displaced manufacture, the bourgeoisie developed wealth and power to the utmost and made itself the first class of the country. The result was that wherever this happened, the bourgeoisie took political power into its own hands and displaced the hitherto ruling classes, the aristocracy, the guildmasters, and their representative, the absolute monarchy.

The bourgeoisie annihilated the power of the aristocracy, the nobility, by abolishing the entailment of estates – in other words, by making landed property subject to purchase and sale, and by doing away with the special privileges of the nobility. It destroyed the power of the guildmasters by abolishing guilds and handicraft privileges. In their place, it put competition

– that is, a state of society in which everyone has the right to enter into any branch of industry, the only obstacle being a lack of the necessary capital.

The introduction of free competition is thus public declaration that from now on the members of society are unequal only to the extent that their capitals are unequal, that capital is the decisive power, and that therefore the capitalists, the bourgeoisie, have become the first class in society.

Free competition is necessary for the establishment of big industry, because it is the only condition of society in which big industry can make its way.

Having destroyed the social power of the nobility and the guildmasters, the bourgeois also destroyed their political power. Having raised itself to the actual position of first class in society, it proclaims itself to be also the dominant political class. This it does through the introduction of the representative system which rests on bourgeois equality before the law and the recognition of free competition, and in European countries takes the form of constitutional monarchy. In these constitutional monarchies, only those who possess a certain capital are voters – that is to say, only members of the bourgeoisie. These bourgeois voters choose the deputies, and these bourgeois deputies, by using their right to refuse to vote taxes, choose a bourgeois government.

Third, everywhere the proletariat develops in step with the bourgeoisie. In proportion, as the bourgeoisie grows in wealth, the proletariat grows in numbers. For, since the proletarians can be employed only by capital, and since capital extends only through employing labor, it follows that the growth of the proletariat proceeds at precisely the same pace as the growth of capital.

Simultaneously, this process draws members of the bourgeoisie and proletarians together into the great cities where industry can be carried on most profitably, and by thus throwing great masses in one spot it gives to the proletarians a consciousness of their own strength.
Moreover, the further this process advances, the more new labor-saving machines are invented, the greater is the pressure exercised by big industry on wages, which, as we have seen, sink to their minimum and therewith render the condition of the proletariat increasingly unbearable. The growing

dissatisfaction of the proletariat thus joins with its rising power to prepare a proletarian social revolution.

12. What were the further consequences of the industrial revolution?
Big industry created, in the steam engine and other machines, the means of endlessly expanding industrial production, speeding it up, and cutting its costs. With production thus facilitated, the free competition, which is necessarily bound up with big industry, assumed the most extreme forms; a multitude of capitalists invaded industry, and, in a short while, more was produced than was needed.

As a consequence, finished commodities could not be sold, and a so-called commercial crisis broke out. Factories had to be closed, their owners went bankrupt, and the workers were without bread. Deepest misery reigned everywhere.

After a time, the superfluous products were sold, the factories began to operate again, wages rose, and gradually business got better than ever.

But it was not long before too many commodities were again produced and a new crisis broke out, only to follow the same course as its predecessor.

Ever since the beginning of this (19th) century, the condition of industry has constantly fluctuated between periods of prosperity and periods of crisis; nearly every five to seven years, a fresh crisis has intervened, always with the greatest hardship for workers, and always accompanied by general revolutionary stirrings and the direct peril to the whole existing order of things.

13. What follows from these periodic commercial crises?
First: That, though big industry in its earliest stage created free competition, it has now outgrown free competition; that, for big industry, competition and generally the individualistic organization of production have become a fetter which it must and will shatter; that, so long as big industry remains on its present footing, it can be maintained only at the cost of general chaos every seven years, each time threatening the whole of civilization and not only plunging the proletarians into misery but also ruining large sections of the bourgeoisie; hence, either that big industry must itself be given up, which is an absolute impossibility, or that it makes unavoidably necessary

an entirely new organization of society in which production is no longer directed by mutually competing individual industrialists but rather by the whole society operating according to a definite plan and taking account of the needs of all.

Second: That big industry, and the limitless expansion of production which it makes possible, bring within the range of feasibility a social order in which so much is produced that every member of society will be in a position to exercise and develop all his powers and faculties in complete freedom.
It thus appears that the very qualities of big industry which, in our present-day society, produce misery and crises are those which, in a different form of society, will abolish this misery and these catastrophic depressions.

We see with the greatest clarity:
(1) That all these evils are from now on to be ascribed solely to a social order which no longer corresponds to the requirements of the real situation; and
(2) That it is possible, through a new social order, to do away with these evils altogether.

14. What will this new social order have to be like?
Above all, it will have to take the control of industry and of all branches of production out of the hands of mutually competing individuals, and instead institute a system in which all these branches of production are operated by society as a whole – that is, for the common account, according to a common plan, and with the participation of all members of society.

It will, in other words, abolish competition and replace it with association.

Moreover, since the management of industry by individuals necessarily implies private property, and since competition is in reality merely the manner and form in which the control of industry by private property owners expresses itself, it follows that private property cannot be separated from competition and the individual management of industry. Private property must, therefore, be abolished and in its place must come the common utilization of all instruments of production and the distribution of all products according to common agreement – in a word, what is called the communal ownership of goods.

In fact, the abolition of private property is, doubtless, the shortest and most significant way to characterize the revolution in the whole social order which has been made necessary by the development of industry – and for this reason it is rightly advanced by communists as their main demand.

15. Was not the abolition of private property possible at an earlier time?

No. Every change in the social order, every revolution in property relations, is the necessary consequence of the creation of new forces of production which no longer fit into the old property relations.

Private property has not always existed.

When, towards the end of the Middle Ages, there arose a new mode of production which could not be carried on under the then existing feudal and guild forms of property, this manufacture, which had outgrown the old property relations, created a new property form, private property. And for manufacture and the earliest stage of development of big industry, private property was the only possible property form; the social order based on it was the only possible social order.

So long as it is not possible to produce so much that there is enough for all, with more left over for expanding the social capital and extending the forces of production – so long as this is not possible, there must always be a ruling class directing the use of society's productive forces, and a poor, oppressed class. How these classes are constituted depends on the stage of development.

The agrarian Middle Ages give us the baron and the serf; the cities of the later Middle Ages show us the guildmaster and the journeyman and the day laborer; the 17th century has its manufacturing workers; the 19th has big factory owners and proletarians.

It is clear that, up to now, the forces of production have never been developed to the point where enough could be developed for all, and that private property has become a fetter and a barrier in relation to the further development of the forces of production.

Now, however, the development of big industry has ushered in a new period. Capital and the forces of production have been expanded to an unprecedented extent, and the means are at hand to multiply them without limit in the near future. Moreover, the forces of production have been concentrated in the hands of a few bourgeois, while the great mass of the people are more and more falling into the proletariat, their situation becoming more wretched and intolerable in proportion to the increase of wealth of the bourgeoisie. And finally, these mighty and easily extended forces of production have so far outgrown private property and the bourgeoisie, that they threaten at any moment to unleash the most violent disturbances of the social order. Now, under these conditions, the abolition of private property has become not only possible but absolutely necessary.

16. Will the peaceful abolition of private property be possible?

It would be desirable if this could happen, and the communists would certainly be the last to oppose it. Communists know only too well that all conspiracies are not only useless, but even harmful. They know all too well that revolutions are not made intentionally and arbitrarily, but that, everywhere and always, they have been the necessary consequence of conditions which were wholly independent of the will and direction of individual parties and entire classes.

But they also see that the development of the proletariat in nearly all civilized countries has been violently suppressed, and that in this way the opponents of communism have been working toward a revolution with all their strength. If the oppressed proletariat is finally driven to revolution, then we communists will defend the interests of the proletarians with deeds as we now defend them with words.

17. Will it be possible for private property to be abolished at one stroke?

No, no more than existing forces of production can at one stroke be multiplied to the extent necessary for the creation of a communal society.

In all probability, the proletarian revolution will transform existing society gradually and will be able to abolish private property only when the means of production are available in sufficient quantity.

18. What will be the course of this revolution?

Above all, it will establish a democratic constitution, and through this, the direct or indirect dominance of the proletariat. Direct in England, where the proletarians are already a majority of the people. Indirect in France and Germany, where the majority of the people consists not only of proletarians, but also of small peasants and petty bourgeois who are in the process of falling into the proletariat, who are more and more dependent in all their political interests on the proletariat, and who must, therefore, soon adapt to the demands of the proletariat. Perhaps this will cost a second struggle, but the outcome can only be the victory of the proletariat.

Democracy would be wholly valueless to the proletariat if it were not immediately used as a means for putting through measures directed against private property and ensuring the livelihood of the proletariat. The main measures, emerging as the necessary result of existing relations, are the following:

(1) Limitation of private property through progressive taxation, heavy inheritance taxes, abolition of inheritance through collateral lines (brothers, nephews, etc.) forced loans, etc.
(2) Gradual expropriation of landowners, industrialists, railroad magnates and shipowners, partly through competition by state industry, partly directly through compensation in the form of bonds.
(3) Confiscation of the possessions of all emigrants and rebels against the majority of the people.
(4) Organization of labor or employment of proletarians on publicly owned land, in factories and workshops, with competition among the workers being abolished and with the factory owners, in so far as they still exist, being obliged to pay the same high wages as those paid by the state.
(5) An equal obligation on all members of society to work until such time as private property has been completely abolished. Formation of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.
(6) Centralization of money and credit in the hands of the state through a national bank with state capital, and the suppression of all private banks and bankers.
(7) Increase in the number of national factories, workshops, railroads, ships; bringing new lands into cultivation and improvement of land already under cultivation – all in proportion to the growth of the capital and labor force at the disposal of the nation.

(8) Education of all children, from the moment they can leave their mother's care, in national establishments at national cost. Education and production together.
(9) Construction, on public lands, of great palaces as communal dwellings for associated groups of citizens engaged in both industry and agriculture and combining in their way of life the advantages of urban and rural conditions while avoiding the one-sidedness and drawbacks of each.
(10) Destruction of all unhealthy and jerry-built dwellings in urban districts.
(11) Equal inheritance rights for children born in and out of wedlock.
(12) Concentration of all means of transportation in the hands of the nation.

It is impossible, of course, to carry out all these measures at once. But one will always bring others in its wake. Once the first radical attack on private property has been launched, the proletariat will find itself forced to go ever further, to concentrate increasingly in the hands of the state all capital, all agriculture, all transport, all trade. All the foregoing measures are directed to this end; and they will become practicable and feasible, capable of producing their centralizing effects to precisely the degree that the proletariat, through its labor, multiplies the country's productive forces.

Finally, when all capital, all production, all exchange have been brought together in the hands of the nation, private property will disappear of its own accord, money will become superfluous, and production will so expand and man so change that society will be able to slough off whatever of its old economic habits may remain.

19. Will it be possible for this revolution to take place in one country alone?
No. By creating the world market, big industry has already brought all the peoples of the Earth, and especially the civilized peoples, into such close relation with one another that none is independent of what happens to the others.

Further, it has coordinated the social development of the civilized countries to such an extent that, in all of them, bourgeoisie and proletariat have become the decisive classes, and the struggle between them the great struggle of the day. It follows that the communist revolution will not merely be a national phenomenon but must take place simultaneously in all

civilized countries – that is to say, at least in England, America, France, and Germany.

It will develop in each of these countries more or less rapidly, as one country or the other has a more developed industry, greater wealth, a more significant mass of productive forces. Hence, it will go slowest and will meet most obstacles in Germany, most rapidly and with the fewest difficulties in England. It will have a powerful impact on the other countries of the world, and will radically alter the course of development which they have followed up to now, while greatly stepping up its pace. It is a universal revolution and will, accordingly, have a universal range.

20. What will be the consequences of the ultimate disappearance of private property?

Society will take all forces of production and means of commerce, as well as the exchange and distribution of products, out of the hands of private capitalists and will manage them in accordance with a plan based on the availability of resources and the needs of the whole society. In this way, most important of all, the evil consequences which are now associated with the conduct of big industry will be abolished.

There will be no more crises; the expanded production, which for the present order of society is overproduction and hence a prevailing cause of misery, will then be insufficient and in need of being expanded much further. Instead of generating misery, overproduction will reach beyond the elementary requirements of society to assure the satisfaction of the needs of all; it will create new needs and, at the same time, the means of satisfying them. It will become the condition of, and the stimulus to, new progress, which will no longer throw the whole social order into confusion, as progress has always done in the past. Big industry, freed from the pressure of private property, will undergo such an expansion that what we now see will seem as petty in comparison as manufacture seems when put beside the big industry of our own day. This development of industry will make available to society a sufficient mass of products to satisfy the needs of everyone.

The same will be true of agriculture, which also suffers from the pressure of private property and is held back by the division of privately owned land into small parcels. Here, existing improvements and scientific procedures

will be put into practice, with a resulting leap forward which will assure to society all the products it needs.

In this way, such an abundance of goods will be able to satisfy the needs of all its members.

The division of society into different, mutually hostile classes will then become unnecessary. Indeed, it will be not only unnecessary but intolerable in the new social order. The existence of classes originated in the division of labor, and the division of labor, as it has been known up to the present, will completely disappear. Mechanical and chemical processes are not enough to bring industrial and agricultural production up to the level we have described; the capacities of the men who make use of these processes must undergo a corresponding development.

Just as the peasants and manufacturing workers of the last century changed their whole way of life and became quite different people when they were drawn into big industry, in the same way, communal control over production by society as a whole, and the resulting new development, will both require an entirely different kind of human material.

People will no longer be, as they are today, subordinated to a single branch of production, bound to it, exploited by it; they will no longer develop one of their faculties at the expense of all others; they will no longer know only one branch, or one branch of a single branch, of production as a whole. Even industry as it is today is finding such people less and less useful.

Industry controlled by society as a whole, and operated according to a plan, presupposes well-rounded human beings, their faculties developed in balanced fashion, able to see the system of production in its entirety.

The form of the division of labor which makes one a peasant, another a cobbler, a third a factory worker, a fourth a stock-market operator, has already been undermined by machinery and will completely disappear. Education will enable young people to quickly familiarize themselves with the whole system of production and to pass from one branch of production to another in response to the needs of society or their own inclinations. It will, therefore, free them from the one-sided character which the present-day division of labor impresses upon every individual. Communist society

will, in this way, make it possible for its members to put their comprehensively developed faculties to full use. But, when this happens, classes will necessarily disappear. It follows, society organized on a communist basis is incompatible with the existence of classes on the one hand, and that the very building of such a society provides the means of abolishing class differences on the other.

A corollary of this is that the difference between city and country is destined to disappear. The management of agriculture and industry by the same people rather than by two different classes of people is, if only for purely material reasons, a necessary condition of communist association. The dispersal of the agricultural population on the land, alongside the crowding of the industrial population into the great cities, is a condition which corresponds to an undeveloped state of both agriculture and industry and can already be felt as an obstacle to further development.

The general cooperation of all members of society for the purpose of planned exploitation of the forces of production, the expansion of production to the point where it will satisfy the needs of all, the abolition of a situation in which the needs of some are satisfied at the expense of the needs of others, the complete liquidation of classes and their conflicts, the rounded development of the capacities of all members of society through the elimination of the present division of labor, through industrial education, through engaging in varying activities, through the participation by all in the enjoyments produced by all, through the combination of city and country – these are the main consequences of the abolition of private property.

21. What will be the influence of communist society on the family?
It will transform the relations between the sexes into a purely private matter which concerns only the persons involved and into which society has no occasion to intervene. It can do this since it does away with private property and educates children on a communal basis, and in this way removes the two bases of traditional marriage – the dependence rooted in private property, of the women on the man, and of the children on the parents.

And here is the answer to the outcry of the highly moral philistines against the “community of women”. Community of women is a condition which belongs entirely to bourgeois society and which today finds its complete

expression in prostitution. But prostitution is based on private property and falls with it. Thus, communist society, instead of introducing community of women, in fact abolishes it.

22. What will be the attitude of communism to existing nationalities?
The nationalities of the peoples associating themselves in accordance with the principle of community will be compelled to mingle with each other as a result of this association and thereby to dissolve themselves, just as the various estate and class distinctions must disappear through the abolition of their basis, private property. [3]

23. What will be its attitude to existing religions?
All religions so far have been the expression of historical stages of development of individual peoples or groups of peoples. But communism is the stage of historical development which makes all existing religions superfluous and brings about their disappearance. [4]

24. How do communists differ from socialists?
The so-called socialists are divided into three categories.
Reactionary Socialists : The first category consists of adherents of a feudal and patriarchal society which has already been destroyed, and is still daily being destroyed, by big industry and world trade and their creation, bourgeois society. This category concludes, from the evils of existing society, that feudal and patriarchal society must be restored because it was free of such evils. In one way or another, all their proposals are directed to this end.

This category of reactionary socialists, for all their seeming partisanship and their scalding tears for the misery of the proletariat, is nevertheless energetically opposed by the communists for the following reasons:

(1) It strives for something which is entirely impossible.
(2) It seeks to establish the rule of the aristocracy, the guildmasters, the small producers, and their retinue of absolute or feudal monarchs, officials, soldiers, and priests – a society which was, to be sure, free of the evils of present-day society but which brought it at least as many evils without even offering to the oppressed workers the prospect of liberation through a communist revolution.

(3) As soon as the proletariat becomes revolutionary and communist, these reactionary socialists show their true colors by immediately making common cause with the bourgeoisie against the proletarians.

Bourgeois Socialists : The second category consists of adherents of present-day society who have been frightened for its future by the evils to which it necessarily gives rise. What they want, therefore, is to maintain this society while getting rid of the evils which are an inherent part of it.

To this end, some propose mere welfare measures – while others come forward with grandiose systems of reform which, under the pretense of re-organizing society, are in fact intended to preserve the foundations, and hence the life, of existing society.

Communists must unremittingly struggle against these bourgeois socialists because they work for the enemies of communists and protect the society which communists aim to overthrow.

Democratic Socialists : Finally, the third category consists of democratic socialists who favor some of the same measures the communists advocate, as described in Question 18, not as part of the transition to communism, however, but as measures which they believe will be sufficient to abolish the misery and evils of present-day society.

These democratic socialists are either proletarians who are not yet sufficiently clear about the conditions of the liberation of their class, or they are representatives of the petty bourgeoisie, a class which, prior to the achievement of democracy and the socialist measures to which it gives rise, has many interests in common with the proletariat.

It follows that, in moments of action, the communists will have to come to an understanding with these democratic socialists, and in general to follow as far as possible a common policy with them – provided that these socialists do not enter into the service of the ruling bourgeoisie and attack the communists.

It is clear that this form of cooperation in action does not exclude the discussion of differences.

25. What is the attitude of the communists to the other political parties of our time?

This attitude is different in different countries.

In England, France, and Belgium, where the bourgeoisie rules, the communists still have a common interest with the various democratic parties, an interest which is all the greater the more closely the socialistic measures they champion approach the aims of the communists – that is, the more clearly and definitely they represent the interests of the proletariat and the more they depend on the proletariat for support. In England, for example, the working-class Chartists [5] are infinitely closer to the communists than the democratic petty bourgeoisie or the so-called Radicals.

In America , where a democratic constitution has already been established, the communists must make common cause with the party which will turn this constitution against the bourgeoisie and use it in the interests of the proletariat – that is, with the agrarian National Reformers. [6]

In Switzerland , the Radicals, though a very mixed party, are the only group with which the communists can cooperate, and, among these Radicals, the Vaudois and Genevese are the most advanced.

In Germany , finally, the decisive struggle now on the order of the day is that between the bourgeoisie and the absolute monarchy. Since the communists cannot enter upon the decisive struggle between themselves and the bourgeoisie until the bourgeoisie is in power, it follows that it is in the interest of the communists to help the bourgeoisie to power as soon as possible in order the sooner to be able to overthrow it. Against the governments, therefore, the communists must continually support the radical liberal party, taking care to avoid the self-deceptions of the bourgeoisie and not fall for the enticing promises of benefits which a victory for the bourgeoisie would allegedly bring to the proletariat. The sole advantages which the proletariat would derive from a bourgeois victory would consist:

(1) in various concessions which would facilitate the unification of the proletariat into a closely knit, battle-worthy, and organized class; and

(2) in the certainty that, on the very day the absolute monarchies fall, the struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat will start. From that day on,

the policy of the communists will be the same as it is now in the countries where the bourgeoisie is already in power.

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[1] In their works written in later periods, Marx and Engels substituted the more accurate concepts of “sale of labor power”, “value of labor power” and “price of labor power” (first introduced by Marx) for “sale of labor”, “value of labor” and “price of labor”, as used here.

[2] Engels left half a page blank here in the manuscript. *The Draft of the Communist Confession of Faith* , has the answer shown for the same question (Number 12).

[3] Engels’ put “unchanged” here, referring to the answer in the June draft under No. 21 which is shown.

[4] Similarly, this refers to the answer to Question 23 in the June draft.

[5] The Chartists were the participants in the political movement of the British workers which lasted from the 1830s to the middle 1850s and had as its slogan the adoption of a People’s Charter, demanding universal franchise and a series of conditions guaranteeing voting rights for all workers. Lenin defined Chartism as the world’s “first broad, truly mass and politically organized proletarian revolutionary movement” (Collected Works, Eng. ed., Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, Vol. 29, p. 309.) The decline of the Chartist movement was due to the strengthening of Britain’s industrial and commercial monopoly and the bribing of the upper stratum of the working class (“the labour aristocracy”) by the British bourgeoisie out of its super-profits. Both factors led to the strengthening of opportunist tendencies in this stratum as expressed, in particular, by the refusal of the trade union leaders to support Chartism.

[6] Probably a reference to the National Reform Association, founded during the 1840s by George H. Evans, with headquarters in New York City, which had for its motto, “Vote Yourself a Farm”.

On Authority

by Freidrich Engels, 1872

A number of Socialists have recently launched a regular crusade against what they call the *principle of authority* . It suffices to tell them that this or that act is *authoritarian* for it to be condemned. This summary mode of procedure is being abused to such an extent that it has become necessary to look into the matter somewhat more closely.

Authority, in the sense in which the word is used here, means: the imposition of the will of another upon ours; on the other hand, authority presupposes subordination. Now, since these two words sound bad, and the relationship which they represent is disagreeable to the subordinated party, the question is to ascertain whether there is any way of dispensing with it, whether—given the conditions of present-day society—we could not create another social system, in which this authority would be given no scope any longer, and would consequently have to disappear.

On examining the economic, industrial and agricultural conditions which form the basis of present-day bourgeois society, we find that they tend more and more to replace isolated action by combined action of individuals. Modern industry, with its big factories and mills, where hundreds of workers supervise complicated machines driven by steam, has superseded the small workshops of the separate producers; the carriages and wagons of the highways have become substituted by railway trains, just as the small schooners and sailing feluccas have been by steam-boats. Even agriculture falls increasingly under the dominion of the machine and of steam, which slowly but relentlessly put in the place of the small proprietors big capitalists, who with the aid of hired workers cultivate vast stretches of land.

Everywhere combined action, the complication of processes dependent upon each other, displaces independent action by individuals. But whoever mentions combined action speaks of organization; now, is it possible to have organization without authority?

Supposing a social revolution dethroned the capitalists, who now exercise their authority over the production and circulation of wealth. Supposing, to adopt entirely the point of view of the anti-authoritarians, that the land and the instruments of labor had become the collective property of the workers who use them. Will authority have disappeared, or will it only have changed its form? Let us see.

Let us take by way of example a cotton spinning mill. The cotton must pass through at least six successive operations before it is reduced to the state of thread, and these operations take place for the most part in different rooms. Furthermore, keeping the machines going requires an engineer to look after the steam engine, mechanics to make the current repairs, and many other laborers whose business it is to transfer the products from one room to another, and so forth. All these workers, men, women and children, are obliged to begin and finish their work at the hours fixed by the authority of the steam, which cares nothing for individual autonomy. The workers must, therefore, first come to an understanding on the hours of work; and these hours, once they are fixed, must be observed by all, without any exception. Thereafter particular questions arise in each room and at every moment concerning the mode of production, distribution of material, etc., which must be settled by decision of a delegate placed at the head of each branch of labor or, if possible, by a majority vote, the will of the single individual will always have to subordinate itself, which means that questions are settled in an authoritarian way. The automatic machinery of the big factory is much more despotic than the small capitalists who employ workers ever have been. At least with regard to the hours of work one may write upon the portals of these factories: *Lasciate ogni autonomia, voi che entrate!* [Leave, ye that enter in, all autonomy behind!]

If man, by dint of his knowledge and inventive genius, has subdued the forces of nature, the latter avenge themselves upon him by subjecting him, in so far as he employs them, to a veritable despotism independent of all social organization. Wanting to abolish authority in large-scale industry is tantamount to wanting to abolish industry itself, to destroy the power loom in order to return to the spinning wheel.

Let us take another example—the railway. Here too the cooperation of an infinite number of individuals is absolutely necessary, and this cooperation

must be practiced during precisely fixed hours so that no accidents may happen. Here, too, the first condition of the job is a dominant will that settles all subordinate questions, whether this will is represented by a single delegate or a committee charged with the execution of the resolutions of the majority of persons interested. In either case there is a very pronounced authority. Moreover, what would happen to the first train dispatched if the authority of the railway employees over the Hon. passengers were abolished?

But the necessity of authority, and of imperious authority at that, will nowhere be found more evident than on board a ship on the high seas. There, in time of danger, the lives of all depend on the instantaneous and absolute obedience of all to the will of one.

When I submitted arguments like these to the most rabid anti-authoritarians, the only answer they were able to give me was the following: Yes, that's true, but there it is not the case of authority which we confer on our delegates, *but of a commission entrusted* ! These gentlemen think that when they have changed the names of things they have changed the things themselves. This is how these profound thinkers mock at the whole world.

We have thus seen that, on the one hand, a certain authority, no matter how delegated, and, on the other hand, a certain subordination, are things which, independently of all social organization, are imposed upon us together with the material conditions under which we produce and make products circulate.

We have seen, besides, that the material conditions of production and circulation inevitably develop with large-scale industry and large-scale agriculture, and increasingly tend to enlarge the scope of this authority. Hence it is absurd to speak of the principle of authority as being absolutely evil, and of the principle of autonomy as being absolutely good. Authority and autonomy are relative things whose spheres vary with the various phases of the development of society. If the autonomists confined themselves to saying that the social organization of the future would restrict authority solely to the limits within which the conditions of production render it inevitable, we could understand each other; but they are blind to all facts that make the thing necessary and they passionately fight the world.

Why do the anti-authoritarians not confine themselves to crying out against political authority, the state? All Socialists are agreed that the political state, and with it political authority, will disappear as a result of the coming social revolution, that is, that public functions will lose their political character and will be transformed into the simple administrative functions of watching over the true interests of society. But the anti-authoritarians demand that the political state be abolished at one stroke, even before the social conditions that gave birth to it have been destroyed. They demand that the first act of the social revolution shall be the abolition of authority. Have these gentlemen ever seen a revolution? A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is the act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon—authoritarian means, if such there be at all; and if the victorious party does not want to have fought in vain, it must maintain this rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionists. Would the Paris Commune have lasted a single day if it had not made use of this authority of the armed people against the bourgeois? Should we not, on the contrary, reproach it for not having used it freely enough?

Therefore, either one of two things: either the anti-authoritarians don't know what they're talking about, in which case they are creating nothing but confusion; or they do know, and in that case they are betraying the movement of the proletariat. In either case they serve the reaction.

Dialectical and Historical Materialism

by Josef Stalin, 1938

Dialectical materialism is the world outlook of the Marxist-Leninist party. It is called dialectical materialism because its approach to the phenomena of nature, its method of studying and apprehending them, is *dialectical* , while its interpretation of the phenomena of nature, its conception of these phenomena, its theory, is *materialistic* .

Historical materialism is the extension of the principles of dialectical materialism to the study of social life, an application of the principles of dialectical materialism to the phenomena of the life of society, to the study of society and of its history.

When describing their dialectical method, Marx and Engels usually refer to Hegel as the philosopher who formulated the main features of dialectics. This, however, does not mean that the dialectics of Marx and Engels is identical with the dialectics of Hegel. As a matter of fact, Marx and Engels took from the Hegelian dialectics only its "rational kernel," casting aside its Hegelian idealistic shell, and developed dialectics further so as to lend it a modern scientific form.

"My dialectic method," says Marx, "is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, ... the process of thinking which, under the name of 'the Idea,' he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos (creator) of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of 'the Idea.' With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind and translated into forms of thought." (Marx, Afterword to the Second German Edition of Volume I of *Capital* .)

When describing their materialism, Marx and Engels usually refer to Feuerbach as the philosopher who restored materialism to its rights. This, however, does not mean that the materialism of Marx and Engels is identical with Feuerbach's materialism. As a matter of fact, Marx and

Engels took from Feuerbach's materialism its "inner kernel," developed it into a scientific-philosophical theory of materialism and cast aside its idealistic and religious-ethical encumbrances. We know that Feuerbach, although he was fundamentally a materialist, objected to the name materialism. Engels more than once declared that "in spite of" the materialist "foundation," Feuerbach "remained... bound by the traditional idealist fetters," and that "the real idealism of Feuerbach becomes evident as soon as we come to his philosophy of religion and ethics." (Marx and Engels, Vol. XIV, pp. 652-54.)

Dialectics comes from the Greek *dialego* , to discourse, to debate. In ancient times dialectics was the art of arriving at the truth by disclosing the contradictions in the argument of an opponent and overcoming these contradictions. There were philosophers in ancient times who believed that the disclosure of contradictions in thought and the clash of opposite opinions was the best method of arriving at the truth. This dialectical method of thought, later extended to the phenomena of nature, developed into the dialectical method of apprehending nature, which regards the phenomena of nature as being in constant movement and undergoing constant change, and the development of nature as the result of the development of the contradictions in nature, as the result of the interaction of opposed forces in nature. In its essence, dialectics is the direct opposite of metaphysics.

1) Marxist Dialectical Method

The principal features of the Marxist dialectical method are as follows:

a) Nature Connected and Determined
Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics does not regard nature as an accidental agglomeration of things, of phenomena, unconnected with, isolated from, and independent of, each other, but as a connected and integral whole, in which things, phenomena are organically connected with, dependent on, and determined by, each other.

The dialectical method therefore holds that no phenomenon in nature can be understood if taken by itself, isolated from surrounding phenomena, inasmuch as any phenomenon in any realm of nature may become meaningless to us if it is not considered in connection with the surrounding conditions, but divorced from them; and that, vice versa, any phenomenon can be understood and explained if considered in its inseparable connection with surrounding phenomena, as one conditioned by surrounding phenomena.

b) Nature is a State of Continuous Motion and Change
Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics holds that nature is not a state of rest and immobility, stagnation and immutability, but a state of continuous movement and change, of continuous renewal and development, where something is always arising and developing, and something always disintegrating and dying away.

The dialectical method therefore requires that phenomena should be considered not only from the standpoint of their interconnection and interdependence, but also from the standpoint of their movement, their change, their development, their coming into being and going out of being.

The dialectical method regards as important primarily not that which at the given moment seems to be durable and yet is already beginning to die away, but that which is arising and developing, even though at the given moment

it may appear to be not durable, for the dialectical method considers invincible only that which is arising and developing.

"All nature," says Engels, "from the smallest thing to the biggest. from grains of sand to suns, from protista (the primary living cells – J. St.) to man, has its existence in eternal coming into being and going out of being, in a ceaseless flux, in unresting motion and change. (Ibid., p 484.)

Therefore, dialectics, Engels says, "takes things and their perceptual images essentially in their interconnection, in their concatenation, in their movement, in their rise and disappearance." (Marx and Engels, Vol. XIV, p. 23.)

c) Natural Quantitative Change Leads to Qualitative Change

Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics does not regard the process of development as a simple process of growth, where quantitative changes do not lead to qualitative changes, but as a development which passes from insignificant and imperceptible quantitative changes to open' fundamental changes' to qualitative changes; a development in which the qualitative changes occur not gradually, but rapidly and abruptly, taking the form of a leap from one state to another; they occur not accidentally but as the natural result of an accumulation of imperceptible and gradual quantitative changes.

The dialectical method therefore holds that the process of development should be understood not as movement in a circle, not as a simple repetition of what has already occurred, but as an onward and upward movement, as a transition from an old qualitative state to a new qualitative state, as a development from the simple to the complex, from the lower to the higher:

"Nature," says Engels, "is the test of dialectics. and it must be said for modern natural science that it has furnished extremely rich and daily increasing materials for this test, and has thus proved that in the last analysis nature's process is dialectical and not metaphysical, that it does not move in an eternally uniform and constantly repeated circle. but passes through a real history. Here prime mention should be made of Darwin, who dealt a severe blow to the metaphysical conception of nature by proving that the organic world of today, plants and animals, and consequently man too,

is all a product of a process of development that has been in progress for millions of years." (Ibid., p. 23.)

Describing dialectical development as a transition from quantitative changes to qualitative changes, Engels says:

"In physics ... every change is a passing of quantity into quality, as a result of a quantitative change of some form of movement either inherent in a body or imparted to it. For example, the temperature of water has at first no effect on its liquid state; but as the temperature of liquid water rises or falls, a moment arrives when this state of cohesion changes and the water is converted in one case into steam and in the other into ice.... A definite minimum current is required to make a platinum wire glow; every metal has its melting temperature; every liquid has a definite freezing point and boiling point at a given pressure, as far as we are able with the means at our disposal to attain the required temperatures; finally, every gas has its critical point at which, by proper pressure and cooling, it can be converted into a liquid state.... What are known as the constants of physics (the point at which one state passes into another – J. St.) are in most cases nothing but designations for the nodal points at which a quantitative (change) increase or decrease of movement causes a qualitative change in the state of the given body, and at which, consequently, quantity is transformed into quality." (Ibid., p 527-28.)

Passing to chemistry, Engels continues:

"Chemistry may be called the science of the qualitative changes which take place in bodies as the effect of changes of quantitative composition. This was already known to Hegel.... Take oxygen: if the molecule contains three atoms instead of the customary two, we get ozone, a body definitely distinct in odor and reaction from ordinary oxygen. And what shall we say of the different proportions in which oxygen combines with nitrogen or sulfur, and each of which produces a body qualitatively different from all other bodies!" (Ibid., p. 528.)

Finally, criticizing Dühring, who scolded Hegel for all he was worth, but surreptitiously borrowed from him the well-known thesis that the transition from the insentient world to the sentient world, from the kingdom of

inorganic matter to the kingdom of organic life, is a leap to a new state, Engels says:

"This is precisely the Hegelian nodal line of measure relations in which at certain definite nodal points, the purely quantitative increase or decrease gives rise to a qualitative leap, for example, in the case of water which is heated or cooled, where boiling point and freezing point are the nodes at which – under normal pressure – the leap to a new aggregate state takes place, and where consequently quantity is transformed into quality." (Ibid., p 45-46.)

d) Contradictions Inherent in Nature

Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics holds that internal contradictions are inherent in all things and phenomena of nature, for they all have their negative and positive sides, a past and a future, something dying away and something developing; and that the struggle between these opposites, the struggle between the old and the new, between that which is dying away and that which is being born, between that which is disappearing and that which is developing, constitutes the internal content of the process of development, the internal content of the transformation of quantitative changes into qualitative changes.

The dialectical method therefore holds that the process of development from the lower to the higher takes place not as a harmonious unfolding of phenomena, but as a disclosure of the contradictions inherent in things and phenomena, as a "struggle" of opposite tendencies which operate on the basis of these contradictions.

"In its proper meaning," Lenin says, "dialectics is the study of the contradiction *within the very essence of things* ." (Lenin, *Philosophical Notebooks* , p. 265.)

And further:
"Development is the 'struggle' of opposites." (Lenin, Vol. XIII, p 301.)

Such, in brief, are the principal features of the Marxist dialectical method.

It is easy to understand how immensely important is the extension of the principles of the dialectical method to the study of social life and the history of society, and how immensely important is the application of these

principles to the history of society and to the practical activities of the party of the proletariat.

If there are no isolated phenomena in the world, if all phenomena are interconnected and interdependent, then it is clear that every social system and every social movement in history must be evaluated not from the standpoint of "eternal justice" or some other preconceived idea, as is not infrequently done by historians, but from the standpoint of the conditions which gave rise to that system or that social movement and with which they are connected.

The slave system would be senseless, stupid and unnatural under modern conditions. But under the conditions of a disintegrating primitive communal system, the slave system is a quite understandable and natural phenomenon, since it represents an advance on the primitive communal system.

The demand for a bourgeois-democratic republic when tsardom and bourgeois society existed, as, let us say, in Russia in 1905, was a quite understandable, proper and revolutionary demand; for at that time a bourgeois republic would have meant a step forward. But now, under the conditions of the U.S.S.R., the demand for a bourgeois-democratic republic would be a senseless and counterrevolutionary demand; for a bourgeois republic would be a retrograde step compared with the Soviet republic.

Everything depends on the conditions, time and place.

It is clear that without such a *historical* approach to social phenomena, the existence and development of the science of history is impossible; for only such an approach saves the science of history from becoming a jumble of accidents and an agglomeration of most absurd mistakes.

Further, if the world is in a state of constant movement and development, if the dying away of the old and the upgrowth of the new is a law of development, then it is clear that there can be no "immutable" social systems, no "eternal principles" of private property and exploitation, no "eternal ideas" of the subjugation of the peasant to the landlord, of the worker to the capitalist.

Hence, the capitalist system can be replaced by the socialist system, just as at one time the feudal system was replaced by the capitalist system.

Hence, we must not base our orientation on the strata of society which are no longer developing, even though they at present constitute the predominant force, but on those strata which are developing and have a future before them, even though they at present do not constitute the predominant force.

In the eighties of the past century, in the period of the struggle between the Marxists and the Narodniks, the proletariat in Russia constituted an insignificant minority of the population, whereas the individual peasants constituted the vast majority of the population. But the proletariat was developing as a class, whereas the peasantry as a class was disintegrating. And just because the proletariat was developing as a class the Marxists based their orientation on the proletariat. And they were not mistaken; for, as we know, the proletariat subsequently grew from an insignificant force into a first-rate historical and political force.

Hence, in order not to err in policy, one must look forward, not backward.

Further, if the passing of slow quantitative changes into rapid and abrupt qualitative changes is a law of development, then it is clear that revolutions made by oppressed classes are a quite natural and inevitable phenomenon.

Hence, the transition from capitalism to socialism and the liberation of the working class from the yoke of capitalism cannot be affected by slow changes, by reforms, but only by a qualitative change of the capitalist system, by revolution.

Hence, in order not to err in policy, one must be a revolutionary, not a reformist.

Further, if development proceeds by way of the disclosure of internal contradictions, by way of collisions between opposite forces on the basis of these contradictions and so as to overcome these contradictions, then it is clear that the class struggle of the proletariat is a quite natural and inevitable phenomenon.

Hence, we must not cover up the contradictions of the capitalist system, but disclose and unravel them; we must not try to check the class struggle but carry it to its conclusion.

Hence, in order not to err in policy, one must pursue an uncompromising proletarian class policy, not a reformist policy of harmony of the interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, not a compromisers' policy of the "growing" of capitalism into socialism.

Such is the Marxist dialectical method when applied to social life, to the history of society.

As to Marxist philosophical materialism, it is fundamentally the direct opposite of philosophical idealism.

2) Marxist Philosophical Materialism

The principal features of Marxist philosophical materialism are as follows:

a) Materialist
Contrary to idealism, which regards the world as the embodiment of an "absolute idea," a "universal spirit," "consciousness," Marx's philosophical materialism holds that the world is by its very nature *material* , that the multifold phenomena of the world constitute different forms of matter in motion, that interconnection and interdependence of phenomena as established by the dialectical method, are a law of the development of moving matter, and that the world develops in accordance with the laws of movement of matter and stands in no need of a "universal spirit."

"The materialistic outlook on nature," says Engels, "means no more than simply conceiving nature just as it exists, without any foreign admixture." (Marx and Engels, Vol. XIV, p. 651.)

Speaking of the materialist views of the ancient philosopher Heraclitus, who held that "the world, the all in one, was not created by any god or any man, but was, is and ever will be a living flame, systematically flaring up and systematically dying down"' Lenin comments: "A very good exposition of the rudiments of dialectical materialism." (Lenin, *Philosophical Notebooks* , p. 318.)

b) Objective Reality
Contrary to idealism, which asserts that only our consciousness really exists, and that the material world, being, nature, exists only in our consciousness' in our sensations, ideas and perceptions, the Marxist philosophical materialism holds that matter, nature, being, is an objective reality existing outside and independent of our consciousness; that matter is primary, since it is the source of sensations, ideas, consciousness, and that consciousness is secondary, derivative, since it is a reflection of matter, a reflection of being; that thought is a product of matter which in its development has reached a high degree of perfection, namely, of the brain,

and the brain is the organ of thought; and that therefore one cannot separate thought from matter without committing a grave error. Engels says:

"The question of the relation of thinking to being, the relation of spirit to nature is the paramount question of the whole of philosophy.... The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps. Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature ... comprised the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belong to the various schools of materialism." (Marx, *Selected Works* , Vol. I, p.329.)

And further:
"The material, sensuously perceptible world to which we ourselves belong is the only reality.... Our consciousness and thinking, however supra-sensuous they may seem, are the product of a material, bodily organ, the brain. Matter is not a product of mind, but mind itself is merely the highest product of matter." (Ibid., p. 332.)

Concerning the question of matter and thought, Marx says:
" *It is impossible to separate thought from matter that thinks* . Matter is the subject of all changes." (Ibid., p. 302.)

Describing Marxist philosophical materialism, Lenin says:
"Materialism in general recognizes objectively real being (matter) as independent of consciousness, sensation, experience.... Consciousness is only the reflection of being, at best an approximately true (adequate, perfectly exact) reflection of it." (Lenin, Vol. XIII, p. 266-67.)

And further:
"Matter is that which, acting upon our sense-organs, produces sensation; matter is the objective reality given to us in sensation.... Matter, nature, being, the physical-is primary, and spirit, consciousness, sensation, the psychical-is secondary." (Ibid., p. 119-20.)

"The world picture is a picture of how matter moves and of how ' *matter thinks* .'" (Ibid., p. 288.)

"The brain is the organ of thought." (Ibid., p. 125.)

c) <u>The World and Its Laws Are Knowable</u>

Contrary to idealism, which denies the possibility of knowing the world and its laws, which does not believe in the authenticity of our knowledge, does not recognize objective truth, and holds that the world is full of "things-in-themselves" that can never be known to science, Marxist philosophical materialism holds that the world and its laws are fully knowable, that our knowledge of the laws of nature, tested by experiment and practice, is authentic knowledge having the validity of objective truth, and that there are no things in the world which are unknowable, but only things which are as yet not known, but which will be disclosed and made known by the efforts of science and practice.

Criticizing the thesis of Kant and other idealists that the world is unknowable and that there are "things-in-themselves" which are unknowable, and defending the well-known materialist thesis that our knowledge is authentic knowledge, Engels writes:

"The most telling refutation of this as of all other philosophical crotchets is practice, namely, experiment and industry. If we are able to prove the correctness of our conception of a natural process by making it ourselves, bringing it into being out of its conditions and making it serve our own purposes into the bargain, then there is an end to the Kantian ungraspable 'thing-in-itself.' The chemical substances produced in the bodies of plants and animals remained such 'things-in-themselves' until organic chemistry began to produce them one after another, whereupon the 'thing-in-itself' became a thing for us, as, for instance, alizarin, the coloring matter of the madder, which we no longer trouble to grow ill the madder roots in the field, but produce much more cheaply and simply from coal tar. For 300 years the Copernican solar system was a hypothesis with a hundred, a thousand or ten thousand chances to one in its favor, but still always a hypothesis. But when Leverrier, by means of the data provided by this system, not only deduced the necessity of the existence of an unknown planet, but also calculated the position in the heavens which this planet must necessarily occupy, and when Galle really found this planet, the Copernican system was proved." (Marx, *Selected Works* , Vol. I, p. 330.)

Accusing Bogdanov, Bazarov, Yushkevich and the other followers of Mach of fideism (a reactionary theory, which prefers faith to science) and defending the well-known materialist thesis that our scientific knowledge of

the laws of nature is authentic knowledge, and that the laws of science represent objective truth, Lenin says:

"Contemporary fideism does not at all reject science; all it rejects is the 'exaggerated claims' of science, to wit, its claim to objective truth. If objective truth exists (as the materialists think), if natural science, reflecting the outer world in human 'experience,' is alone capable of giving us objective truth, then all fideism is absolutely refuted." (Lenin, Vol. XIII, p. 102.)

Such, in brief, are the characteristic features of the Marxist philosophical materialism.

It is easy to understand how immensely important is the extension of the principles of philosophical materialism to the study of social life, of the history of society, and how immensely important is the application of these principles to the history of society and to the practical activities of the party of the proletariat.

If the connection between the phenomena of nature and their interdependence are laws of the development of nature, it follows, too, that the connection and interdependence of the phenomena of social life are laws of the development of society, and not something accidental.

Hence, social life, the history of society, ceases to be an agglomeration of "accidents", for the history of society becomes a development of society according to regular laws, and the study of the history of society becomes a science.

Hence, the practical activity of the party of the proletariat must not be based on the good wishes of "outstanding individuals." not on the dictates of "reason," "universal morals," etc., but on the laws of development of society and on the study of these laws.

Further, if the world is knowable and our knowledge of the laws of development of nature is authentic knowledge, having the validity of objective truth, it follows that social life, the development of society, is also knowable, and that the data of science regarding the laws of development of society are authentic data having the validity of objective truths.

Hence, the science of the history of society, despite all the complexity of the phenomena of social life, can become as precise a science as, let us say, biology, and capable of making use of the laws of development of society for practical purposes.

Hence, the party of the proletariat should not guide itself in its practical activity by casual motives, but by the laws of development of society, and by practical deductions from these laws.

Hence, socialism is converted from a dream of a better future for humanity into a science.

Hence, the bond between science and practical activity, between theory and practice, their unity, should be the guiding star of the party of the proletariat.

Further, if nature, being, the material world, is primary, and consciousness, thought, is secondary, derivative; if the material world represents objective reality existing independently of the consciousness of men, while consciousness is a reflection of this objective reality, it follows that the material life of society, its being, is also primary, and its spiritual life secondary, derivative, and that the material life of society is an objective reality existing independently of the will of men, while the spiritual life of society is a reflection of this objective reality, a reflection of being.

Hence, the source of formation of the spiritual life of society, the origin of social ideas, social theories, political views and political institutions, should not be sought for in the ideas, theories, views and political institutions themselves, but in the conditions of the material life of society, in social being, of which these ideas, theories, views, etc., are the reflection.

Hence, if in different periods of the history of society different social ideas, theories, views and political institutions are to be observed; if under the slave system we encounter certain social ideas, theories, views and political institutions, under feudalism others, and under capitalism others still, this is not to be explained by the "nature", the "properties" of the ideas, theories, views and political institutions themselves but by the different conditions of the material life of society at different periods of social development.

Whatever is the being of a society, whatever are the conditions of material life of a society, such are the ideas, theories, political views and political institutions of that society.

In this connection, Marx says:
"It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness." (Marx, *Selected Works* , Vol. I, p. 269.)

Hence, in order not to err in policy, in order not to find itself in the position of idle dreamers, the party of the proletariat must not base its activities on abstract "principles of human reason", but on the concrete conditions of the material life of society, as the determining force of social development; not on the good wishes of "great men," but on the real needs of development of the material life of society.

The fall of the utopians, including the Narodniks, anarchists and Socialist-Revolutionaries, was due, among other things to the fact that they did not recognize the primary role which the conditions of the material life of society play in the development of society, and, sinking to idealism, did not base their practical activities on the needs of the development of the material life of society, but, independently of and in spite of these needs, on "ideal plans" and "all-embracing projects", divorced from the real life of society.

The strength and vitality of Marxism-Leninism lies in the fact that it does base its practical activity on the needs of the development of the material life of society and never divorces itself from the real life of society.

It does not follow from Marx's words, however, that social ideas, theories, political views and political institutions are of no significance in the life of society, that they do not reciprocally affect social being, the development of the material conditions of the life of society. We have been speaking so far of the origin of social ideas, theories, views and political institutions, of the way they arise, of the fact that the spiritual life of society is a reflection of the conditions of its material life. As regards the significance of social ideas, theories, views and political institutions, as regards their role in history, historical materialism, far from denying them, stresses the

important role and significance of these factors in the life of society, in its history.

There are different kinds of social ideas and theories. There are old ideas and theories which have outlived their day and which serve the interests of the moribund forces of society. Their significance lies in the fact that they hamper the development, the progress of society. Then there are new and advanced ideas and theories which serve the interests of the advanced forces of society. Their significance lies in the fact that they facilitate the development, the progress of society, and their significance is greater the more accurately they reflect the needs of development of the material life of society.

New social ideas and theories arise only after the development of the material life of society has set new tasks before society. But once they have arisen they become a most potent force which facilitates the carrying out of the new tasks set by the development of the material life of society, a force which facilitates the progress of society. It is precisely here that the tremendous organizing, mobilizing and transforming value of new ideas, new theories, new political views and new political institutions manifests itself. New social ideas and theories arise precisely because they are necessary to society, because it is impossible to carry out the urgent tasks of development of the material life of society without their organizing, mobilizing and transforming action. Arising out of the new tasks set by the development of the material life of society, the new social ideas and theories force their way through, become the possession of the masses, mobilize and organize them against the moribund forces of society, and thus facilitate the overthrow of these forces, which hamper the development of the material life of society.

Thus social ideas, theories and political institutions, having arisen on the basis of the urgent tasks of the development of the material life of society, the development of social being, themselves then react upon social being, upon the material life of society, creating the conditions necessary for completely carrying out the urgent tasks of the material life of society, and for rendering its further development possible.

In this connection, Marx says:

"Theory becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses." (Marx and Engels, Vol. I, p. 406.)

Hence, in order to be able to influence the conditions of material life of society and to accelerate their development and their improvement, the party of the proletariat must rely upon such a social theory, such a social idea as correctly reflects the needs of development of the material life of society, and which is therefore capable of setting into motion broad masses of the people and of mobilizing them and organizing them into a great army of the proletarian party, prepared to smash the reactionary forces and to clear the way for the advanced forces of society.

The fall of the "Economists" and the Mensheviks was due, among other things, to the fact that they did not recognize the mobilizing, organizing and transforming role of advanced theory, of advanced ideas and, sinking to vulgar materialism, reduced the role of these factors almost to nothing, thus condemning the Party to passivity and inanition.

The strength and vitality of Marxism-Leninism is derived from the fact that it relies upon an advanced theory which correctly reflects the needs of development of the material life of society, that it elevates theory to a proper level, and that it deems it its duty to utilize every ounce of the mobilizing, organizing and transforming power of this theory.

That is the answer historical materialism gives to the question of the relation between social being and social consciousness, between the conditions of development of material life and the development of the spiritual life of society.

3) Historical Materialism

It now remains to elucidate the following question: What, from the viewpoint of historical materialism, is meant by the "conditions of material life of society" which in the final analysis determine the physiognomy of society, its ideas, views, political institutions, etc.?

What, after all, are these "conditions of material life of society," what are their distinguishing features?

There can be no doubt that the concept "conditions of material life of society" includes, first of all, nature which surrounds society, geographical environment , which is one of the indispensable and constant conditions of material life of society and which, of course, influences the development of society. What role does geographical environment play in the development of society? Is geographical environment the chief force determining the physiognomy of society, the character of the social system of man, the transition from one system to another, or isn't it?

Historical materialism answers this question in the negative.

Geographical environment is unquestionably one of the constant and indispensable conditions of development of society and, of course, influences the development of society, accelerates or retards its development. But its influence is not the *determining* influence, inasmuch as the changes and development of society proceed at an incomparably faster rate than the changes and development of geographical environment. in the space of 3000 years three different social systems have been successively superseded in Europe: the primitive communal system, the slave system and the feudal system. In the eastern part of Europe, in the U.S.S.R., even four social systems have been superseded. Yet during this period geographical conditions in Europe have either not changed at all, or have changed so slightly that geography takes no note of them. And that is quite natural. Changes in geographical environment of any importance require millions of years, whereas a few hundred or a couple of thousand

years are enough for even very important changes in the system of human society.

It follows from this that geographical environment cannot be the chief cause, the *determining* cause of social development; for that which remains almost unchanged in the course of tens of thousands of years cannot be the chief cause of development of that which undergoes fundamental changes in the course of a few hundred years.

Further, there can be no doubt that the concept "conditions of material life of society" also includes growth of population and density of population of one degree or another; for people are an essential element of the conditions of material life of society, and without a definite minimum number of people there can be no material life of society. Is growth of population the chief force that determines the character of the social system of man, or isn't it?

Historical materialism answers this question too in the negative.

Of course, growth of population does influence the development of society, does facilitate or retard the development of society, but it cannot be the chief force of development of society, and its influence on the development of society cannot be the *determining* influence because, by itself, growth of population does not furnish the clue to the question why a given social system is replaced precisely by such and such a new system and not by another, why the primitive communal system is succeeded precisely by the slave system, the slave system by the feudal system, and the feudal system by the bourgeois system, and not by some other.

If growth of population were the determining force of social development, then a higher density of population would be bound to give rise to a correspondingly higher type of social system. But we do not find this to be the case. The density of population in China is four times as great as in the U.S.A., yet the U.S.A. stands higher than China in the scale of social development; for in China a semi-feudal system still prevails, whereas the U.S.A. has long ago reached the highest stage of development of capitalism. The density of population in Belgium is 9 times as great as in the U.S.A., and 26 times as great as in the U.S.S.R. Yet the U.S.A. stands higher than Belgium in the scale of social development; and as for the U.S.S.R.,

Belgium lags a whole historical epoch behind this country, for in Belgium the capitalist system prevails, whereas the U.S.S.R. has already done away with capitalism and has set up a socialist system.

It follows from this that growth of population is not, and cannot be, the chief force of development of society, the force which *determines* the character of the social system, the physiognomy of society.

a) What Is the Chief Determinant Force?

What, then, is the chief force in the complex of conditions of material life of society which determines the physiognomy of society, the character of the social system, the development of society from one system to another?

This force, historical materialism holds, is the *method of procuring the means of life* necessary for human existence, the *mode of production of material values* – food, clothing, footwear, houses, fuel, instruments of production, etc. – which are indispensable for the life and development of society.

In order to live, people must have food, clothing, footwear, shelter, fuel, etc.; in order to have these material values, people must produce them; and in order to produce them, people must have the instruments of production with which food, clothing, footwear, shelter, fuel, etc., are produced, they must be able to produce these instruments and to use them.

The *instruments of production* wherewith material values are produced, the *people* who operate the instruments of production and carry on the production of material values thanks to a certain *production experience* and *labor skill* – all these elements jointly constitute the *productive forces* of society.

But the productive forces are only one aspect of production, only one aspect of the mode of production, an aspect that expresses the relation of men to the objects and forces of nature which they make use of for the production of material values. Another aspect of production, another aspect of the mode of production, is the relation of men to each other in the process of production, men's *relations of production* . Men carry on a struggle against nature and utilize nature for the production of material values not in isolation from each other, not as separate individuals, but in common, in

groups, in societies. Production, therefore, is at all times and under all conditions social production. In the production of material values men enter into mutual relations of one kind or another within production, into relations of production of one kind or another. These may be relations of cooperation and mutual help between people who are free from exploitation; they may be relations of domination and subordination; and, lastly, they may be transitional from one form of relations of production to another. But whatever the character of the relations of production may be, always and in every system they constitute just as essential an element of production as the productive forces of society.

"In production," Marx says, "men not only act on nature but also on one another. They produce only by co-operating in a certain way and mutually exchanging their activities. In order to produce, they enter into definite connections and relations with one another and only within these social connections and relations does their action on nature, does production, take place." (Marx and Engels, Vol. V, p. 429.)

Consequently, production, the mode of production, embraces both the productive forces of society and men's relations of production, and is thus the embodiment of their unity in the process of production of material values.

b) The First Feature of Production

The *first feature* of production is that it never stays at one point for a long time and is always in a state of change and development, and that, furthermore, changes in the mode of production inevitably call forth changes in the whole social system, social ideas, political views and political institutions – they call forth a reconstruction of the whole social and political order. At different stages of development people make use of different modes of production, or, to put it more crudely, lead different manners of life. In the primitive commune there is one mode of production, under slavery there is another mode of production, under feudalism a third mode of production and so on. And, correspondingly, men's social system, the spiritual life of men, their views and political institutions also vary.

Whatever is the mode of production of a society, such in the main is the society itself, its ideas and theories, its political views and institutions.

Or, to put it more crudely, whatever is man's manner of life such is his manner of thought.

This means that the history of development of society is above all the history of the development of production, the history of the modes of production which succeed each other in the course of centuries, the history of the development of productive forces and of people's relations of production.

Hence, the history of social development is at the same time the history of the producers of material values themselves, the history of the laboring masses, who are the chief force in the process of production and who carry on the production of material values necessary for the existence of society.

Hence, if historical science is to be a real science, it can no longer reduce the history of social development to the actions of kings and generals, to the actions of "conquerors" and "subjugators" of states, but must above all devote itself to the history of the producers of material values, the history of the laboring masses, the history of peoples.

Hence, the clue to the study of the laws of history of society must not be sought in men's minds, in the views and ideas of society, but in the mode of production practiced by society in any given historical period; it must be sought in the economic life of society.

Hence, the prime task of historical science is to study and disclose the laws of production, the laws of development of the productive forces and of the relations of production, the laws of economic development of society.

Hence, if the party of the proletariat is to be a real party, it must above all acquire a knowledge of the laws of development of production, of the laws of economic development of society.

Hence, if it is not to err in policy, the party of the proletariat must both in drafting its program and in its practical activities proceed primarily from the laws of development of production from the laws of economic development of society.

c) <u>The Second Feature of Production</u>

The *second feature* of production is that its changes and development always begin with changes and development of the productive forces, and in the first place, with changes and development of the instruments of production. Productive forces are therefore the most mobile and revolutionary element of production. First the productive forces of society change and develop, and then, *depending* on these changes and *in conformity with them* , men's relations of production, their economic relations, change. This, however, does not mean that the relations of production do not influence the development of the productive forces and that the latter are not dependent on the former. While their development is dependent on the development of the productive forces, the relations of production in their turn react upon the development of the productive forces, accelerating or retarding it. In this connection it should be noted that the relations of production cannot for too long a time lag behind and be in a state of contradiction to the growth of the productive forces, inasmuch as the productive forces can develop in full measure only when the relations of production correspond to the character, the state of the productive forces and allow full scope for their development. Therefore, however much the relations of production may lag behind the development of the productive forces, they must, sooner or later, come into correspondence with – and actually do come into correspondence with – the level of development of the productive forces, the character of the productive forces. Otherwise we would have a fundamental violation of the unity of the productive forces and the relations of production within the system of production, a disruption of production as a whole, a crisis of production, a destruction of productive forces.

An instance in which the relations of production do not correspond to the character of the productive forces, conflict with them, is the economic crises in capitalist countries, where private capitalist ownership of the means of production is in glaring incongruity with the social character of the process of production, with the character of the productive forces. This results in economic crises, which lead to the destruction of productive forces. Furthermore, this incongruity itself constitutes the economic basis of social revolution, the purpose of which IS to destroy the existing relations of production and to create new relations of production corresponding to the character of the productive forces.

In contrast, an instance in which the relations of production completely correspond to the character of the productive forces is the socialist national economy of the U.S.S.R., where the social ownership of the means of production fully corresponds to the social character of the process of production, and where, because of this, economic crises and the destruction of productive forces are unknown.

Consequently, the productive forces are not only the most mobile and revolutionary element in production, but are also the determining element in the development of production.

Whatever are the productive forces such must be the relations of production.

While the state of the productive forces furnishes the answer to the question – with what instruments of production do men produce the material values they need? – the state of the relations of production furnishes the answer to another question – who owns the *means of production* (the land, forests, waters, mineral resources, raw materials, instruments of production, production premises, means of transportation and communication, etc.), who commands the means of production, whether the whole of society, or individual persons, groups, or classes which utilize them for the exploitation of other persons, groups or classes?

Here is a rough picture of the development of productive forces from ancient times to our day. The transition from crude stone tools to the bow and arrow, and the accompanying transition from the life of hunters to the domestication of animals and primitive pasturage; the transition from stone tools to metal tools (the iron ax, the wooden plow fitted with an iron coulter, etc.), with a corresponding transition to tillage and agriculture; a further improvement in metal tools for the working up of materials, the introduction of the blacksmith's bellows, the introduction of pottery, with a corresponding development of handicrafts, the separation of handicrafts from agriculture, the development of an independent handicraft industry and, subsequently, of manufacture; the transition from handicraft tools to machines and the transformation of handicraft and manufacture into machine industry; the transition to the machine system and the rise of modern large-scale machine industry – such is a general and far from complete picture of the development of the productive forces of society in

the course of man's history. It will be clear that the development and improvement of the instruments of production was effected by men who were related to production, and not independently of men; and, consequently, the change and development of the instruments of production was accompanied by a change and development of men, as the most important element of the productive forces, by a change and development of their production experience, their labor skill, their ability to handle the instruments of production.

In conformity with the change and development of the productive forces of society in the course of history, men's relations of production, their economic relations also changed and developed.

Main types of Relations of Production

Five *main* types of relations of production are known to history: primitive communal, slave, feudal, capitalist and socialist.

The basis of the relations of production under the primitive communal system is that the means of production are socially owned. This in the main corresponds to the character of the productive forces of that period. Stone tools, and, later, the bow and arrow, precluded the possibility of men individually combating the forces of nature and beasts of prey. In order to gather the fruits of the forest, to catch fish, to build some sort of habitation, men were obliged to work in common if they did not want to die of starvation, or fall victim to beasts of prey or to neighboring societies. Labor in common led to the common ownership of the means of production, as well as of the fruits of production. Here the conception of private ownership of the means of production did not yet exist, except for the personal ownership of certain implements of production which were at the same time means of defense against beasts of prey. Here there was no exploitation, no classes.

The basis of the relations of production under the slave system is that the slave owner owns the means of production, he also owns the worker in production – the slave, whom he can sell, purchase, or kill as though he were an animal. Such relations of production in the main correspond to the state of the productive forces of that period. Instead of stone tools, men now have metal tools at their command; instead of the wretched and primitive

husbandry of the hunter, who knew neither pasturage nor tillage, there now appear pasturage tillage, handicrafts, and a division of labor between these branches of production. There appears the possibility of the exchange of products between individuals and between societies, of the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few, the actual accumulation of the means of production in the hands of a minority, and the possibility of subjugation of the majority by a minority and the conversion of the majority into slaves. Here we no longer find the common and free labor of all members of society in the production process – here there prevails the forced labor of slaves, who are exploited by the non-laboring slave owners. Here, therefore, there is no common ownership of the means of production or of the fruits of production. It is replaced by private ownership. Here the slave owner appears as the prime and principal property owner in the full sense of the term.

Rich and poor, exploiters and exploited, people with full rights and people with no rights, and a fierce class struggle between them – such is the picture of the slave system.

The basis of the relations of production under the feudal system is that the feudal lord owns the means of production and does not fully own the worker in production – the serf, whom the feudal lord can no longer kill, but whom he can buy and sell. Alongside feudal ownership there exists individual ownership by the peasant and the handicraftsman of his implements of production and his private enterprise based on his personal labor. Such relations of production in the main correspond to the state of the productive forces of that period. Further improvements in the smelting and working of iron; the spread of the iron plow and the loom; the further development of agriculture, horticulture, viniculture and dairying; the appearance of manufactories alongside of the handicraft workshops – such are the characteristic features of the state of the productive forces.

The new productive forces demand that the laborer shall display some kind of initiative in production and an inclination for work, an interest in work. The feudal lord therefore discards the slave, as a laborer who has no interest in work and is entirely without initiative, and prefers to deal with the serf, who has his own husbandry, implements of production, and a certain

interest in work essential for the cultivation of the land and for the payment in kind of a part of his harvest to the feudal lord.

Here private ownership is further developed. Exploitation is nearly as severe as it was under slavery – it is only slightly mitigated. A class struggle between exploiters and exploited is the principal feature of the feudal system.

The basis of the relations of production under the capitalist system is that the capitalist owns the means of production, but not the workers in production – the wage laborers, whom the capitalist can neither kill nor sell because they are personally free, but who are deprived of means of production and) in order not to die of hunger, are obliged to sell their labor power to the capitalist and to bear the yoke of exploitation. Alongside capitalist property in the means of production, we find, at first on a wide scale, private property of the peasants and handicraftsmen in the means of production, these peasants and handicraftsmen no longer being serfs, and their private property being based on personal labor. In place of the handicraft workshops and manufactories there appear huge mills and factories equipped with machinery. In place of the manorial estates tilled by the primitive implements of production of the peasant, there now appear large capitalist farms run on scientific lines and supplied with agricultural machinery

The new productive forces require that the workers in production shall be better educated and more intelligent than the downtrodden and ignorant serfs, that they be able to understand machinery and operate it properly.

Therefore, the capitalists prefer to deal with wage-workers, who are free from the bonds of serfdom and who are educated enough to be able to properly operate machinery.

But having developed productive forces to a tremendous extent, capitalism has become enmeshed in contradictions which it is unable to solve. By producing larger and larger quantities of commodities, and reducing their prices, capitalism intensifies competition, ruins the mass of small and medium private owners, converts them into proletarians and reduces their purchasing power, with the result that it becomes impossible to dispose of the commodities produced. On the other hand, by expanding production and

concentrating millions of workers in huge mills and factories, capitalism lends the process of production a social character and thus undermines its own foundation, inasmuch as the social character of the process of production demands the social ownership of the means of production; yet the means of production remain private capitalist property, which is incompatible with the social character of the process of production.

These irreconcilable contradictions between the character of the productive forces and the relations of production make themselves felt in periodic crises of overproduction, when the capitalists, finding no effective demand for their goods owing to the ruin of the mass of the population which they themselves have brought about, are compelled to burn products, destroy manufactured goods, suspend production, and destroy productive forces at a time when millions of people are forced to suffer unemployment and starvation, not because there are not enough goods, but because there is an overproduction of goods.

This means that the capitalist relations of production have ceased to correspond to the state of productive forces of society and have come into irreconcilable contradiction with them.

This means that capitalism is pregnant with revolution, whose mission it is to replace the existing capitalist ownership of the means of production by socialist ownership.

This means that the main feature of the capitalist system is a most acute class struggle between the exploiters and the exploited.

The basis of the relations of production under the socialist system , which so far has been established only in the U.S.S.R., is the social ownership of the means of production. Here there are no longer exploiters and exploited. The goods produced are distributed according to labor performed, on the principle: "He who does not work, neither shall he eat." Here the mutual relations of people in the process of production are marked by comradely cooperation and the socialist mutual assistance of workers who are free from exploitation. Here the relations of production fully correspond to the state of productive forces; for the social character of the process of production is reinforced by the social ownership of the means of production.

For this reason socialist production in the U.S.S.R. knows no periodical crises of over-production and their accompanying absurdities.
For this reason, the productive forces here develop at an accelerated pace; for the relations of production that correspond to them offer full scope for such development.

Such is the picture of the development of men's relations of production in the course of human history.

Such is the dependence of the development of the relations of production on the development of the productive forces of society, and primarily, on the development of the instruments of production, the dependence by virtue of which the changes and development of the productive forces sooner or later lead to corresponding changes and development of the relations of production.

"The use and fabrication of instruments of labor," says Marx, "although existing in the germ among certain species of animals, is specifically characteristic of the human labor-process, and Franklin therefore defines man as a tool-making animal. Relics of bygone instruments of labor possess the same importance for the investigation of extinct economical forms of society, as do fossil bones for the determination of extinct species of animals. It is not the articles made, but how they are made that enables us to distinguish different economical epochs. Instruments of labor not only supply a standard of the degree of development to which human labor has attained, but they are also indicators of the social conditions under which that labor is carried on." (Marx, *Capital* , Vol. I, 1935, p. 121.)

And further:
"Social relations are closely bound up with productive forces. In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production; and in changing their mode of production, in changing the way of earning their living, they change all their social relations. The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist.” (Marx and Engels, Vol. V, p. 564.)

"There is a continual movement of growth in productive forces, of destruction in social relations, of formation in ideas; the only immutable thing is the abstraction of movement." (Ibid., p. 364.)

Speaking of historical materialism as formulated in The Communist Manifesto, Engels says:

"Economic production and the structure of society of every historical epoch necessarily arising therefrom constitute the foundation for the political and intellectual history of that epoch; ... consequently (ever since the dissolution of the primeval communal ownership of land) all history has been a history of class struggles, of struggles between exploited and exploiting, between dominated and dominating classes at various stages of social development; ... this struggle, however, has now reached a stage where the exploited and oppressed class (the proletariat) can no longer emancipate itself from the class which exploits and oppresses it (the bourgeoisie), without at the same time for ever freeing the whole of society from exploitation, oppression and class struggles...." (Engels' Preface to the German Edition of the *Manifesto* .)

d) The Third Feature of Production

The *third feature* of production is that the rise of new productive forces and of the relations of production corresponding to them does not take place separately from the old system, after the disappearance of the old system, but within the old system; it takes place not as a result of the deliberate and conscious activity of man, but spontaneously, unconsciously, independently of the will of man It takes place spontaneously and independently of the will of man for two reasons.

Firstly, because men are not free to choose one mode of production or another, because as every new generation enters life it finds productive forces and relations of production already existing as the result of the work of former generations, owing to which it is obliged at first to accept and adapt itself to everything it finds ready-made in the sphere of production in order to be able to produce material values.

Secondly, because, when improving one instrument of production or another, one clement of the productive forces or another, men do not realize, do not understand or stop to reflect what social results these improvements will lead to, but only think of their everyday interests, of lightening their labor and of securing some direct and tangible advantage for themselves.

When, gradually and gropingly, certain members of primitive communal society passed from the use of stone tools to the use of iron tools, they, of course, did not know and did not stop to reflect what *social* results this innovation would lead to; they did not understand or realize that the change to metal tools meant a revolution in production, that it would in the long run lead to the slave system. They simply wanted to lighten their labor and secure an immediate and tangible advantage; their conscious activity was confined within the narrow bounds of this everyday personal interest.

When, in the period of the feudal system, the young bourgeoisie of Europe began to erect, alongside of the small guild workshops, large manufactories, and thus advanced the productive forces of society, it, of course, did not know and did not stop to reflect what social consequences this innovation would lead to; it did not realize or understand that this "small" innovation would lead to a regrouping of social forces which was to end in a revolution both against the power of kings, whose favors it so highly valued, and against the nobility, to whose ranks its foremost representatives not infrequently aspired. It simply wanted to lower the cost of producing goods, to throw larger quantities of goods on the markets of Asia and of recently discovered America, and to make bigger profits. Its conscious activity was confined within the narrow bounds of this commonplace practical aim.

When the Russian capitalists, in conjunction with foreign capitalists, energetically implanted modern large-scale machine industry in Russia, while leaving tsardom intact and turning the peasants over to the tender mercies of the landlords, they, of course, did not know and did not stop to reflect what *social* consequences this extensive growth of productive forces would lead to; they did not realize or understand that this big leap in the realm of the productive forces of society would lead to a regrouping of social forces that would enable the proletariat to effect a union with the peasantry and to bring about a victorious socialist revolution. They simply wanted to expand industrial production to the limit, to gain control of the huge home market, to become monopolists, and to squeeze as much profit as possible out of the national economy.

Their conscious activity did not extend beyond their commonplace, strictly practical interests.

Accordingly, Marx says:

"In the social production of their life (that is, in the production of the material values necessary to the life of men – J. St.), men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and *independent* of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces." (Marx, *Selected Works* , Vol. I, p. 269.)

This, however, does not mean that changes in the relations of production, and the transition from old relations of production to new relations of production proceed smoothly, without conflicts, without upheavals. On the contrary such a transition usually takes place by means of the revolutionary overthrow of the old relations of production and the establishment of new relations of production. Up to a certain period the development of the productive forces and the changes in the realm of the relations of production proceed spontaneously independently of the will of men. But that is so only up to a certain moment, until the new and developing productive forces have reached a proper state of maturity After the new productive forces have matured, the existing relations of production and their upholders – the ruling classes – become that "insuperable" obstacle which can only be removed by the conscious action of the new classes, by the forcible acts of these classes, by revolution. Here there stands out in bold relief the *tremendous role* of new social ideas, of new political institutions, of a new political power, whose mission it is to abolish by force the old relations of production. Out of the conflict between the new productive forces and the old relations of production, out of the new economic demands of society, there arise new social ideas; the new ideas organize and mobilize the masses; the masses become welded into a new political army, create a new revolutionary power, and make use of it to abolish by force the old system of relations of production, and to firmly establish the new system. The spontaneous process of development yields place to the conscious actions of men, peaceful development to violent upheaval, evolution to revolution.

"The proletariat," says Marx, "during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organize itself as a class...by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production...." (*Manifesto of the Communist Party* , 1938, p. 52.)

And further:

"The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible." (Ibid., p. 50.)

"Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one." (Marx, *Capital* , Vol. I, 1955, p. 603.)

Here is the formulation – a formulation of genius – of the essence of historical materialism given by Marx in 1859 in his historic Preface to his famous book, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* :

"In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or – what is but a legal expression for the same thing – with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic – in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary this consciousness must be explained rather from the

contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social productive forces and the relations of production. No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed; and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself. Therefore mankind always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve; since looking at the matter more closely, it will always be found that the task itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation." (Marx, *Selected Works* , Vol. I, p. 269-70.)

Such is Marxist materialism as applied to social life, to the history of society.

Such are the principal features of dialectical and historical materialism.

The Manifesto of the Communist Party

by Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, 1847

Preface

The 1888 English Edition

The Manifesto was published as the platform of the Communist League, a working men's association, first exclusively German, later on international, and under the political conditions of the Continent before 1848, unavoidably a secret society. At a Congress of the League, held in November 1847, Marx and Engels were commissioned to prepare a complete theoretical and practical party programme. Drawn up in German, in January 1848, the manuscript was sent to the printer in London a few weeks before the French Revolution of February 24. A French translation was brought out in Paris shortly before the insurrection of June 1848. The first English translation, by Miss Helen Macfarlane, appeared in George Julian Harney's *Red Republican* , London, 1850. A Danish and a Polish edition had also been published.

The defeat of the Parisian insurrection of June 1848—the first great battle between proletariat and bourgeoisie—drove again into the background, for a time, the social and political aspirations of the European working class. Thenceforth, the struggle for supremacy was, again, as it had been before the Revolution of February, solely between different sections of the propertied class; the working class was reduced to a fight for political elbow-room, and to the position of extreme wing of the middle-class Radicals. Wherever independent proletarian movements continued to show signs of life, they were ruthlessly hunted down. Thus the Prussian police hunted out the Central Board of the Communist League, then located in Cologne. The members were arrested and, after eighteen months' imprisonment, they were tried in October 1852. This celebrated "Cologne

Communist Trial" lasted from October 4 till November 12; seven of the prisoners were sentenced to terms of imprisonment in a fortress, varying from three to six years. Immediately after the sentence, the League was formally dissolved by the remaining members. As to the Manifesto, it seemed henceforth doomed to oblivion.

When the European workers had recovered sufficient strength for another attack on the ruling classes, the International Working Men' s Association sprang up. But this association, formed with the express aim of welding into one body the whole militant proletariat of Europe and America, could not at once proclaim the principles laid down in the Manifesto. The International was bound to have a programme broad enough to be acceptable to the English trade unions, to the followers of Proudhon in France, Belgium, Italy, and Spain, and to the Lassalleans in Germany. [1]

Marx, who drew up this programme to the satisfaction of all parties, entirely trusted to the intellectual development of the working class, which was sure to result from combined action and mutual discussion. The very events and vicissitudes in the struggle against capital, the defeats even more than the victories, could not help bringing home to men' s minds the insufficiency of their various favorite nostrums, and preparing the way for a more complete insight into the true conditions for working-class emancipation. And Marx was right. The International, on its breaking in 1874, left the workers quite different men from what it found them in 1864. Proudhonism in France, Lassalleanism in Germany, were dying out, and even the conservative English trade unions, though most of them had long since severed their connection with the International, were gradually advancing towards that point at which, last year at Swansea, their president [W. Bevan] could say in their name: "Continental socialism has lost its terror for us." In fact, the principles of the Manifesto had made considerable headway among the working men of all countries.

The Manifesto itself came thus to the front again. Since 1850, the German text had been reprinted several times in Switzerland, England, and America. In 1872, it was translated into English in New York, where the translation was published in *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly* . From this English version, a French one was made in *Le Socialiste* of New York. Since then, at least two more English translations, more or less mutilated, have been

brought out in America, and one of them has been reprinted in England. The first Russian translation, made by Bakunin, was published at Herzen' s Kolokol office in Geneva, about 1863; a second one, by the heroic Vera Zasulich, also in Geneva, in 1882. A new Danish edition is to be found in *Socialdemokratisk Bibliothek* , Copenhagen, 1885; a fresh French translation in *Le Socialiste* , Paris, 1886. From this latter, a Spanish version was prepared and published in Madrid, 1886. The German reprints are not to be counted; there have been twelve altogether at the least. An Armenian translation, which was to be published in Constantinople some months ago, did not see the light, I am told, because the publisher was afraid of bringing out a book with the name of Marx on it, while the translator declined to call it his own production. Of further translations into other languages I have heard but had not seen. Thus the history of the Manifesto reflects the history of the modern working-class movement; at present, it is doubtless the most widespread, the most international production of all socialist literature, the common platform acknowledged by millions of working men from Siberia to California.

Yet, when it was written, we could not have called it a *socialist* manifesto. By Socialists, in 1847, were understood, on the one hand the adherents of the various Utopian systems: Owenites in England, Fourierists in France, [See Robert Owen and François Fourier] both of them already reduced to the position of mere sects, and gradually dying out; on the other hand, the most multifarious social quacks who, by all manner of tinkering, professed to redress, without any danger to capital and profit, all sorts of social grievances, in both cases men outside the working-class movement, and looking rather to the "educated" classes for support. Whatever portion of the working class had become convinced of the insufficiency of mere political revolutions, and had proclaimed the necessity of total social change, called itself Communist. It was a crude, rough-hewn, purely instinctive sort of communism; still, it touched the cardinal point and was powerful enough amongst the working class to produce the Utopian communism of Cabet in France, and of Weitling in Germany. Thus, in 1847, socialism was a middle-class movement, communism a working-class movement. Socialism was, on the Continent at least, "respectable"; communism was the very opposite. And as our notion, from the very beginning, was that "the emancipation of the workers must be the act of the

working class itself," there could be no doubt as to which of the two names we must take. Moreover, we have, ever since, been far from repudiating it.

The Manifesto being our joint production, I consider myself bound to state that the fundamental proposition which forms the nucleus belongs to Marx. That proposition is: That in every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organization necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently the whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes; That the history of these class struggles forms a series of evolutions in which, nowadays, a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class—the proletariat—cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class—the bourgeoisie—without, at the same time, and once and for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinction, and class struggles.

This proposition, which, in my opinion, is destined to do for history what Darwin' s theory has done for biology, we both had been gradually approaching for some years before 1845. How far I had independently progressed towards it is best shown by my *Conditions of the Working Class in England* . But when I again met Marx at Brussels, in spring 1845, he had it already worked out and put it before me in terms almost as clear as those in which I have stated it here.

From our joint preface to the German edition of 1872, I quote the following:

"However much that state of things may have altered during the last twenty-five years, the general principles laid down in the Manifesto are, on the whole, as correct today as ever. Here and there, some detail might be improved. The practical application of the principles will depend, as the Manifesto itself states, everywhere and at all times, on the historical conditions for the time being existing, and, for that reason, no special stress is laid on the revolutionary measures proposed at the end of Section II. That passage would, in many respects, be very differently worded today. In view of the gigantic strides of Modern Industry since 1848, and of the

accompanying improved and extended organization of the working class, in view of the practical experience gained, first in the February Revolution, and then, still more, in the Paris Commune, where the proletariat for the first time held political power for two whole months, this programme has in some details been antiquated. One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes." (See *The Civil War in France: Address of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association* 1871, where this point is further developed.) Further, it is self-evident that the criticism of socialist literature is deficient in relation to the present time, because it comes down only to 1847; also that the remarks on the relation of the Communists to the various opposition parties (Section IV), although, in principle still correct, yet in practice are antiquated, because the political situation has been entirely changed, and the progress of history has swept from off the Earth the greater portion of the political parties there enumerated.

"But then, the Manifesto has become a historical document which we have no longer any right to alter."

The present translation is by Mr Samuel Moore, the translator of the greater portion of Marx' s Capital. We have revised it in common, and I have added a few notes explanatory of historical allusions.

Frederick Engels
January 30, 1888, London

Preamble

A specter is haunting Europe—the specter of communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcize this specter: Pope and Tsar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies.

Where is the party in opposition that has not been decried as communistic by its opponents in power? Where is the opposition that has not hurled back the branding reproach of communism, against the more advanced opposition parties, as well as against its reactionary adversaries?

Two things result from this fact:

1. Communism is already acknowledged by all European powers to be itself a power.
2. It is high time that Communists should openly, in the face of the whole world, publish their views, their aims, their tendencies, and meet this nursery tale of the Specter of Communism with a manifesto of the party itself.

To this end, Communists of various nationalities have assembled in London and sketched the following manifesto, to be published in the English, French, German, Italian, Flemish and Danish languages.

Chapter 1: Bourgeois and Proletarians [2]

The history of all hitherto existing society [3] is the history of class struggles.

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master [4] and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations.

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinct feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other—Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.

From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns. From these burgesses the first elements of the bourgeoisie were developed.

The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonization of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave to commerce, to

navigation, to industry, an impulse never before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a rapid development.

The feudal system of industry, in which industrial production was monopolized by closed guilds, now no longer sufficed for the growing wants of the new markets. The manufacturing system took its place. The guild-masters were pushed on one side by the manufacturing middle class; division of labor between the different corporate guilds vanished in the face of division of labor in each single workshop.

Meantime the markets kept ever growing, the demand ever rising. Even manufacturer no longer sufficed. Thereupon, steam and machinery revolutionized industrial production. The place of manufacture was taken by the giant, Modern Industry; the place of the industrial middle class by industrial millionaires, the leaders of the whole industrial armies, the modern bourgeois.

Modern industry has established the world market, for which the discovery of America paved the way. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land. This development has, in its turn, reacted on the extension of industry; and in proportion as industry, commerce, navigation, railways extended, in the same proportion the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the Middle Ages.

We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange.

Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class. An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, an armed and self-governing association in the medieval commune [5] : here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany); there taxable “third estate” of the monarchy (as in France); afterwards, in the period of manufacturing proper, serving either the semi-feudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, cornerstone of the great monarchies in general, the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political

sway. The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part.

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors", and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment". It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom—Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honored and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage laborers.

The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation.

The bourgeoisie has disclosed how it came to pass that the brutal display of vigor in the Middle Ages, which reactionaries so much admire, found its fitting complement in the most slothful indolence. It has been the first to show what man's activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expeditions that put in the shade all former Exoduses of nations and crusades.

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier

ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the entire surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of Reactionists, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilized nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation. The cheap prices of commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.

The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life. Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilized ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West.

The bourgeoisie keeps more and more doing away with the scattered state of the population, of the means of production, and of property. It has agglomerated population, centralized the means of production, and has concentrated property in a few hands. The necessary consequence of this was political centralisation. Independent, or but loosely connected provinces, with separate interests, laws, governments, and systems of taxation, became lumped together into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class-interest, one frontier, and one customs-tariff.

The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalisation of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground—what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labor?

We see then: the means of production and of exchange, on whose foundation the bourgeoisie built itself up, were generated in feudal society. At a certain stage in the development of these means of production and of exchange, the conditions under which feudal society produced and exchanged, the feudal organization of agriculture and manufacturing industry, in one word, the feudal relations of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder.

Into their place stepped free competition, accompanied by a social and political constitution adapted in it, and the economic and political sway of the bourgeois class.

A similar movement is going on before our own eyes. Modern bourgeois society, with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeois and of its rule. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodic return put the existence of the entire bourgeois society on its trial , each time more threateningly. In these crises, a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises, there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity—the epidemic of overproduction. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation, had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed; and why? Because there is too much civilization, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.

The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself.

But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those

weapons—the modern working class—the proletarians.

In proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e., capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed—a class of laborers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labor increases capital. These laborers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.

Owing to the extensive use of machinery, and to the division of labor, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him. Hence, the cost of production of a workman is restricted, almost entirely, to the means of subsistence that he requires for maintenance, and for the propagation of his race. But the price of a commodity, and therefore also of labor, is equal to its cost of production. In proportion, therefore, as the repulsiveness of the work increases, the wage decreases. Nay more, in proportion as the use of machinery and division of labor increases, in the same proportion the burden of toil also increases, whether by prolongation of the working hours, by the increase of the work exacted in a given time or by increased speed of machinery, etc.

Modern Industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of laborers, crowded into the factory, are organized like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the overlooker, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is.

The less the skill and exertion of strength implied in manual labor, in other words, the more modern industry becomes developed, the more is the labor of men superseded by that of women. Differences of age and sex have no longer any distinctive social validity for the working class. All are

instruments of labour, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex.

No sooner is the exploitation of the laborer by the manufacturer, so far, at an end, that he receives his wages in cash, than he is set upon by the other portions of the bourgeoisie, the landlord, the shopkeeper, the pawnbroker, etc.

The lower strata of the middle class—the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants—all these sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which Modern Industry is carried on, and is swamped in the competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialized skill is rendered worthless by new methods of production. Thus the proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population.

The proletariat goes through various stages of development. With its birth begins its struggle with the bourgeoisie. At first the contest is carried on by individual laborers, then by the workpeople of a factory, then by the operative of one trade, in one locality, against the individual bourgeois who directly exploits them. They direct their attacks not against the bourgeois conditions of production, but against the instruments of production themselves; they destroy imported wares that compete with their labor, they smash to pieces machinery, they set factories ablaze, they seek to restore by force the vanished status of the workman of the Middle Ages.

At this stage, the laborers still form an incoherent mass scattered over the whole country, and broken up by their mutual competition. If anywhere they unite to form more compact bodies, this is not yet the consequence of their own active union, but of the union of the bourgeoisie, which class, in order to attain its own political ends, is compelled to set the whole proletariat in motion, and is moreover yet, for a time, able to do so. At this stage, therefore, the proletarians do not fight their enemies, but the enemies of their enemies, the remnants of absolute monarchy, the landowners, the non-industrial bourgeois, the petty bourgeois. Thus, the whole historical movement is concentrated in the hands of the bourgeoisie; every victory so obtained is a victory for the bourgeoisie.

But with the development of industry, the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more. The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat are more and more equalized, in proportion as machinery obliterates all distinctions of labor, and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level. The growing competition among the bourgeois, and the resulting commercial crises, make the wages of the workers ever more fluctuating. The increasing improvement of machinery, ever more rapidly developing, makes their livelihood more and more precarious; the collisions between individual workmen and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. Thereupon, the workers begin to form combinations (Trades' Unions) against the bourgeois; they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for these occasional revolts. Here and there, the contest breaks out into riots.

Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever expanding union of the workers. This union is helped on by the improved means of communication that are created by modern industry, and that place the workers of different localities in contact with one another. It was just this contact that was needed to centralize the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national struggle between classes. But every class struggle is a political struggle. And that union, to attain which the burghers of the Middle Ages, with their miserable highways, required centuries, the modern proletarian, thanks to railways, achieve in a few years.

This organization of the proletarians into a class, and, consequently into a political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves. But it ever rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier. It compels legislative recognition of particular interests of the workers, by taking advantage of the divisions among the bourgeoisie itself. Thus, the ten-hours' bill in England was carried.

Altogether collisions between the classes of the old society further, in many ways, the course of development of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie finds itself involved in a constant battle. At first with the aristocracy; later on,

with those portions of the bourgeoisie itself, whose interests have become antagonistic to the progress of industry; at all time with the bourgeoisie of foreign countries. In all these battles, it sees itself compelled to appeal to the proletariat, to ask for help, and thus, to drag it into the political arena. The bourgeoisie itself, therefore, supplies the proletariat with its own elements of political and general education, in other words, it furnishes the proletariat with weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie.

Further, as we have already seen, entire sections of the ruling class are, by the advance of industry, precipitated into the proletariat, or are at least threatened in their conditions of existence. These also supply the proletariat with fresh elements of enlightenment and progress.

Finally, in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the progress of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact within the whole range of old society, assumes such a violent, glaring character, that a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands. Just as, therefore, at an earlier period, a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole.

Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product.

The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance, they are revolutionary, they are only so in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat; they thus defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat.

The “dangerous class”, [lumpenproletariat] the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of the old society, may, here

and there, be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution; its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue.

In the condition of the proletariat, those of old society at large are already virtually swamped. The proletarian is without property; his relation to his wife and children has no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family relations; modern industry labor, modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him of every trace of national character. Law, morality, religion, are to him so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests.

All the preceding classes that got the upper hand sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation. The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property.

All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air.

Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle. The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie.

In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society, up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat.

Hitherto, every form of society has been based, as we have already seen, on the antagonism of oppressing and oppressed classes. But in order to oppress a class, certain conditions must be assured to it under which it can, at least, continue its slavish existence. The serf, in the period of serfdom, raised himself to membership in the commune, just as the petty bourgeois, under the yoke of the feudal absolutism, managed to develop into a bourgeois. The modern laborer, on the contrary, instead of rising with the process of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth. And here it becomes evident, that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society, and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an overriding law. It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him. Society can no longer live under this bourgeoisie, in other words, its existence is no longer compatible with society.

The essential conditions for the existence and for the sway of the bourgeois class is the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage-labor. Wage-labor rests exclusively on competition between the laborers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the laborers, due to competition, by the revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.

Chapter 2: Proletarians and Communists

In what relation do the Communists stand to the proletarians as a whole?

The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to the other working-class parties. They have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole. They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mold the proletarian movement.

The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.

The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.

The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat.

The theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered, by this or that would-be universal reformer.

They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes. The abolition of existing property relations is not at all a distinctive feature of communism.

All property relations in the past have continually been subject to historical change consequent upon the change in historical conditions.

The French Revolution, for example, abolished feudal property in favor of bourgeois property.

The distinguishing feature of Communism is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property. But modern bourgeois private property is the final and most complete expression of the system of producing and appropriating products, that is based on class antagonisms, on the exploitation of the many by the few.

In this sense, the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property.

We Communists have been reproached with the desire of abolishing the right of personally acquiring property as the fruit of a man's own labor, which property is alleged to be the groundwork of all personal freedom, activity and independence.

Hard-won, self-acquired, self-earned property! Do you mean the property of petty artisan and of the small peasant, a form of property that preceded the bourgeois form? There is no need to abolish that; the development of industry has to a great extent already destroyed it, and is still destroying it daily.

Or do you mean the modern bourgeois private property?

But does wage-labor create any property for the laborer? Not a bit. It creates capital, i.e., that kind of property which exploits wage-labor, and which cannot increase except upon condition of begetting a new supply of wage-labor for fresh exploitation. Property, in its present form, is based on the antagonism of capital and wage labor. Let us examine both sides of this antagonism.

To be a capitalist, is to have not only a purely personal, but a social status in production. Capital is a collective product, and only by the united action of many members, nay, in the last resort, only by the united action of all members of society, can it be set in motion.

Capital is therefore not only personal; it is a social power.

When, therefore, capital is converted into common property, into the property of all members of society, personal property is not thereby transformed into social property. It is only the social character of the property that is changed. It loses its class character.

Let us now take wage-labor.

The average price of wage-labor is the minimum wage, i.e., that quantum of the means of subsistence which is absolutely requisite to keep the laborer in bare existence as a laborer. What, therefore, the wage-laborer appropriates by means of his labor, merely suffices to prolong and reproduce a bare existence. We by no means intend to abolish this personal appropriation of the products of labor, an appropriation that is made for the maintenance and reproduction of human life, and that leaves no surplus wherewith to command the labor of others. All that we want to do away with is the miserable character of this appropriation, under which the laborer lives merely to increase capital, and is allowed to live only insofar as the interest of the ruling class requires it.

In bourgeois society, living labor is but a means to increase accumulated labor. In Communist society, accumulated labor is but a means to widen, to enrich, to promote the existence of the laborer.

In bourgeois society, therefore, the past dominates the present; in Communist society, the present dominates the past. In bourgeois society capital is independent and has individuality, while the living person is dependent and has no individuality.

And the abolition of this state of things is called by the bourgeois, abolition of individuality and freedom! And rightly so. The abolition of bourgeois individuality, bourgeois independence, and bourgeois freedom is undoubtedly aimed at.

By freedom it’s meant, under the present bourgeois conditions of production, free trade, free selling and buying.

But if selling and buying disappears, free selling and buying disappears also. This talk about free selling and buying, and all the other “brave

words" of our bourgeois about freedom in general, have a meaning, if any, only in contrast with restricted selling and buying, with the fettered traders of the Middle Ages, but have no meaning when opposed to the Communistic abolition of buying and selling, of the bourgeois conditions of production, and of the bourgeoisie itself.

You are horrified at our intention to do away with private property. But in your existing society, private property is already done away with for nine-tenths of the population; its existence for the few is solely due to its non-existence in the hands of those nine-tenths. You reproach us, therefore, with intending to do away with a form of property, the necessary condition for whose existence is the non-existence of any property for the immense majority of society.

In one word, you reproach us with intending to do away with your property. Precisely so; that is just what we intend.

From the moment when labor can no longer be converted into capital, money, or rent, into a social power capable of being monopolized, i.e., from the moment when individual property can no longer be transformed into bourgeois property, into capital, from that moment, you say, individuality vanishes.

You must, therefore, confess that by "individual" you mean no other person than the bourgeois, than the middle-class owner of property. This person must, indeed, be swept out of the way, and made impossible.

Communism deprives no man of the power to appropriate the products of society; all that it does is to deprive him of the power to subjugate the labor of others by means of such appropriations.

It has been objected that upon the abolition of private property, all work will cease, and universal laziness will overtake us.

According to this, bourgeois society ought long ago to have gone to the dogs through sheer idleness; for those of its members who work, acquire nothing, and those who acquire anything do not work. The whole of this objection is but another expression of the tautology: that there can no longer be any wage-labor when there is no longer any capital.

All objections urged against the Communistic mode of producing and appropriating material products, have, in the same way, been urged against the Communistic mode of producing and appropriating intellectual products. Just as, to the bourgeois, the disappearance of class property is the disappearance of production itself, so the disappearance of class culture is, to him, identical with the disappearance of all culture.

That culture, the loss of which he laments, is, for the enormous majority, a mere training to act as a machine.

But don't wrangle with us so long as you apply, to our intended abolition of bourgeois property, the standard of your bourgeois notions of freedom, culture, law, &c. Your very ideas are but the outgrowth of the conditions of your bourgeois production and bourgeois property, just as your jurisprudence is but the will of your class made into a law for all, a will whose essential character and direction are determined by the economical conditions of existence of your class.

The selfish misconception that induces you to transform into eternal laws of nature and of reason, the social forms springing from your present mode of production and form of property – historical relations that rise and disappear in the progress of production – this misconception you share with every ruling class that has preceded you. What you see clearly in the case of ancient property, what you admit in the case of feudal property, you are of course forbidden to admit in the case of your own bourgeois form of property.

Abolition [*Aufhebung*] of the family! Even the most radical flare up at this infamous proposal of the Communists.

On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form, this family exists only among the bourgeoisie. But this state of things finds its complement in the practical absence of the family among the proletarians, and in public prostitution.

The bourgeois family will vanish as a matter of course when its complement vanishes, and both will vanish with the vanishing of capital.

Do you charge us with wanting to stop the exploitation of children by their parents? To this crime we plead guilty.

But, you say, we destroy the most hallowed of relations, when we replace home education with social.

And your education! Is not that also social, and determined by the social conditions under which you educate, by the intervention direct or indirect, of society, by means of schools, &c.? The Communists have not invented the intervention of society in education; they do but seek to alter the character of that intervention, and to rescue education from the influence of the ruling class.

The bourgeois clap-trap about the family and education, about the hallowed co-relation of parents and child, becomes all the more disgusting, the more, by the action of Modern Industry, all the family ties among the proletarians are torn asunder, and their children transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labor.

But you Communists would introduce community of women, screams the bourgeoisie in chorus.

The bourgeois sees his wife as a mere instrument of production. He hears that the instruments of production are to be exploited in common, and, naturally, can come to no other conclusion than that the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to the women.

He has not even a suspicion that the real point aimed at is to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production.

For the rest, nothing is more ridiculous than the virtuous indignation of our bourgeois at the community of women which, they pretend, is to be openly and officially established by the Communists. The Communists have no need to introduce community of women; it has existed almost from time immemorial.

Our bourgeois, not content with having wives and daughters of their proletarians at their disposal, not to speak of common prostitutes, take the greatest pleasure in seducing each other's wives.

Bourgeois marriage is, in reality, a system of wives in common and thus, at the most, what the Communists might possibly be reproached with is that they desire to introduce, in substitution for a hypocritically concealed, an openly legalized community of women. For the rest, it is self-evident that the abolition of the present system of production must bring with it the abolition of the community of women springing from that system, i.e., of prostitution both public and private.

The Communists are further reproached with desiring to abolish countries and nationality.

The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got. Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself the nation, it is so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word.

National differences and antagonism between peoples are daily more and more vanishing, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world market, to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto.

The supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster. United action, of the leading civilized countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat.

In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another will also be put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to. In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end.

The charges against Communism made from a religious, a philosophical and, generally, from an ideological standpoint, are not deserving of serious examination.

Does it require deep intuition to comprehend that man’s ideas, views, and conception, in one word, man’s consciousness, changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his social relations and in his social life?

What else does the history of ideas prove, than that intellectual production changes its character in proportion as material production is changed? The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class.

When people speak of the ideas that revolutionize society, they do but express the fact that within the old society the elements of a new one have been created, and that the dissolution of the old ideas keeps even pace with the dissolution of the old conditions of existence.

When the ancient world was in its last throes, the ancient religions were overcome by Christianity. When Christian ideas succumbed in the 18th century to rationalist ideas, feudal society fought its death battle with the then revolutionary bourgeoisie. The ideas of religious liberty and freedom of conscience merely gave expression to the sway of free competition within the domain of knowledge.

"Undoubtedly," it will be said, "religious, moral, philosophical, and juridical ideas have been modified in the course of historical development. But religion, morality, philosophy, political science, and law, constantly survived this change."

"There are, besides, eternal truths, such as Freedom, Justice, etc., that are common to all states of society. But Communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion, and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis; it therefore acts in contradiction to all past historical experience."

What does this accusation reduce itself to? The history of all past society has consisted in the development of class antagonisms, antagonisms that assumed different forms at different epochs.

But whatever form they may have taken, one fact is common to all past ages, viz., the exploitation of one part of society by the other. No wonder, then, that the social consciousness of past ages, despite all the multiplicity and variety it displays, moves within certain common forms, or general ideas, which cannot completely vanish except with the total disappearance of class antagonisms.

The Communist revolution is the most radical rupture with traditional property relations; no wonder that its development involved the most

radical rupture with traditional ideas.

But let us have done with the bourgeois objections to Communism.

We have seen above, that the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class to win the battle of democracy.

The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degree, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the total productive forces as rapidly as possible.

Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property, and on the conditions of bourgeois production; by means of measures, therefore, which appear economically insufficient and untenable, but which, in the course of the movement, outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order, and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionizing the mode of production.

These measures will, of course, be different in different countries. Nevertheless, in most advanced countries, the following will be pretty generally applicable.

1. Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.
2. A heavy progressive or graduated income tax.
3. Abolition of all rights of inheritance.
4. Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels.
5. Centralisation of credit in the hands of the state, by means of a national bank with State capital and an exclusive monopoly.
6. Centralisation of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the State.
7. Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State; the bringing into cultivation of waste-lands, and the improvement of the soil generally in accordance with a common plan.
8. Equal liability of all to work. Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.

9. Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of all the distinction between town and country by a more even distribution of the populace over the country.
10. Free education for all children in public schools. Abolition of children's factory labor in its present form. Combination of education with industrial production, &c, &c.

When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organize itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class.

In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.

Chapter 3: Socialist and Communist Literature

1. Reactionary Socialism

A. Feudal Socialism

Owing to their historical position, it became the vocation of the aristocracies of France and England to write pamphlets against modern bourgeois society. In the French Revolution of July 1830, and in the English reform agitation [6] , these aristocracies again succumbed to the hateful upstart. Thenceforth, a serious political struggle was altogether out of the question. A literary battle alone remained possible. But even in the domain of literature the old cries of the restoration period had become impossible. [7]

In order to arouse sympathy, the aristocracy was obliged to lose sight, apparently, of its own interests, and to formulate their indictment against the bourgeoisie in the interest of the exploited working class alone. Thus, the aristocracy took their revenge by singing lampoons on their new masters and whispering in his ears sinister prophecies of coming catastrophe.

In this way arose feudal Socialism: half lamentation, half lampoon; half an echo of the past, half menace of the future; at times, by its bitter, witty and incisive criticism, striking the bourgeoisie to the very heart's core; but always ludicrous in its effect, through total incapacity to comprehend the march of modern history.

The aristocracy, in order to rally the people to them, waved the proletarian alms-bag in front for a banner. But the people, so often as it joined them, saw on their hindquarters the old feudal coats of arms, and deserted with loud and irreverent laughter.

One section of the French Legitimists and "Young England" exhibited this spectacle.

In pointing out that their mode of exploitation was different to that of the bourgeoisie, the feudalists forget that they exploited under circumstances and conditions that were quite different and that are now antiquated. In

showing that, under their rule, the modern proletariat never existed, they forget that the modern bourgeoisie is the necessary offspring of their own form of society.

For the rest, so little do they conceal the reactionary character of their criticism that their chief accusation against the bourgeois amounts to this, that under the bourgeois régime a class is being developed which is destined to cut up root and branch the old order of society.

What they upbraid the bourgeoisie with is not so much that it creates a proletariat as that it creates a *revolutionary* proletariat.

In political practice, therefore, they join in all coercive measures against the working class; and in ordinary life, despite their high-falutin phrases, they stoop to pick up the golden apples dropped from the tree of industry, and to barter truth, love, and honor, for traffic in wool, beetroot-sugar, and potato spirits. [8]

As the parson has ever gone hand in hand with the landlord, so has Clerical Socialism with Feudal Socialism.

Nothing is easier than to give Christian asceticism a Socialist tinge. Has not Christianity declaimed against private property, against marriage, against the State? Has it not preached in the place of these, charity and poverty, celibacy and mortification of the flesh, monastic life and Mother Church? Christian Socialism is but the holy water with which the priest consecrates the heart-burnings of the aristocrat.

B. Petty-Bourgeois Socialism

The feudal aristocracy was not the only class that was ruined by the bourgeoisie, not the only class whose conditions of existence pined and perished in the atmosphere of modern bourgeois society. The medieval burgesses and the small peasant proprietors were the precursors of the modern bourgeoisie. In those countries which are but little developed, industrially and commercially, these two classes still vegetate side by side with the rising bourgeoisie.

In countries where modern civilisation has become fully developed, a new class of petty bourgeois has been formed, fluctuating between proletariat and bourgeoisie, and ever renewing itself as a supplementary part of

bourgeois society. The individual members of this class, however, are being constantly hurled down into the proletariat by the action of competition, and, as modern industry develops, they even see the moment approaching when they will completely disappear as an independent section of modern society, to be replaced in manufactures, agriculture and commerce, by overlookers, bailiffs and shopmen.

In countries like France, where the peasants constitute far more than half of the population, it was natural that writers who sided with the proletariat against the bourgeoisie should use, in their criticism of the bourgeois *régime* , the standard of the peasant and petty bourgeois, and from the standpoint of these intermediate classes, should take up the cudgels for the working class. Thus arose petty-bourgeois Socialism. Sismondi was the head of this school, not only in France but also in England.

This school of Socialism dissected with great acuteness the contradictions in the conditions of modern production. It laid bare the hypocritical apologies of economists. It proved, incontrovertibly , the disastrous effects of machinery and division of labor; the concentration of capital and land in a few hands; overproduction and crises; it pointed out the inevitable ruin of the petty bourgeois and peasant, the misery of the proletariat, the anarchy in production, the crying inequalities in the distribution of wealth, the industrial war of extermination between nations, the dissolution of old moral bonds, of the old family relations, of the old nationalities.

In its positive aims, however, this form of Socialism aspires either to restoring the old means of production and of exchange, and with them the old property relations, and the old society, or to cramping the modern means of production and of exchange within the framework of the old property relations that have been, and were bound to be, exploded by those means. In either case, it is both reactionary and Utopian.

Its last words are: corporate guilds for manufacture; patriarchal relations in agriculture.

Ultimately, when stubborn historical facts had dispersed all intoxicating effects of self-deception, this form of Socialism ended in a miserable fit of the blues.

C. German or "True" Socialism

The Socialist and Communist literature of France, a literature that originated under the pressure of a bourgeoisie in power, and that was the expressions of the struggle against this power, was introduced into Germany at a time when the bourgeoisie, in that country, had just begun its contest with feudal absolutism.

German philosophers, would-be philosophers, and *beaux esprits* (men of letters), eagerly seized on this literature, only forgetting that when these writings immigrated from France into Germany, French social conditions had not immigrated along with them. In contact with German social conditions, this French literature lost all its immediate practical significance and assumed a purely literary aspect. Thus, to the German philosophers of the Eighteenth Century, the demands of the first French Revolution were nothing more than the demands of "Practical Reason" in general, and the utterance of the will of the revolutionary French bourgeoisie signified, in their eyes, the laws of pure Will, of Will as it was bound to be, of true human Will generally.

The work of the German *literati* consisted solely in bringing the new French ideas into harmony with their ancient philosophical conscience, or rather, in annexing the French ideas without deserting their own philosophical point of view.

This annexation took place in the same way in which a foreign language is appropriated, namely, by translation.

It is well known how the monks wrote silly lives of Catholic Saints *over* the manuscripts on which the classical works of ancient heathendom had been written. The German *literati* reversed this process with the profane French literature. They wrote their philosophical nonsense beneath the French original. For instance, beneath the French criticism of the economic functions of money, they wrote "Alienation of Humanity", and beneath the French criticism of the bourgeois state they wrote "Dethronement of the Category of the General", and so forth.

The introduction of these philosophical phrases at the back of the French historical criticisms, they dubbed "Philosophy of Action", "True

Socialism", "German Science of Socialism", "Philosophical Foundation of Socialism", and so on.

The French Socialist and Communist literature was thus completely emasculated. And, since it ceased in the hands of the German to express the struggle of one class with the other, he felt conscious of having overcome "French one-sidedness" and of representing, not true requirements, but the requirements of Truth; not the interests of the proletariat, but the interests of Human Nature, of Man in general, who belongs to no class, has no reality, who exists only in the misty realm of philosophical fantasy.

This German socialism, which took its schoolboy task so seriously and solemnly, and extolled its poor stock-in-trade in such a mountebank fashion, meanwhile gradually lost its pedantic innocence.

The fight of the Germans, and especially of the Prussian bourgeoisie, against feudal aristocracy and absolute monarchy, in other words, the liberal movement, became more earnest.

By this, the long-wished for opportunity was offered to "True" Socialism of confronting the political movement with the Socialist demands, of hurling the traditional anathemas against liberalism, against representative government, against bourgeois competition, bourgeois freedom of the press, bourgeois legislation, bourgeois liberty and equality, and of preaching to the masses that they had nothing to gain, and everything to lose, by this bourgeois movement. German Socialism forgot, in the nick of time, that the French criticism, whose silly echo it was, presupposed the existence of modern bourgeois society, with its corresponding economic conditions of existence, and the political constitution adapted thereto, the very things those attainment was the object of the pending struggle in Germany.

To the absolute governments, with their following of parsons, professors, country squires, and officials, it served as a welcome scarecrow against the threatening bourgeoisie.

It was a sweet finish, after the bitter pills of flogging and bullets, with which these same governments, just at that time, dosed the German working-class risings.

While this “True” Socialism thus served the government as a weapon for fighting the German bourgeoisie, it, at the same time, directly represented a reactionary interest, the interest of German Philistines. In Germany, the *petty-bourgeois* class, a relic of the sixteenth century, and since then constantly cropping up again under the various forms, is the real social basis of the existing state of things.

To preserve this class is to preserve the existing state of things in Germany. The industrial and political supremacy of the bourgeoisie threatens it with certain destruction—on the one hand, from the concentration of capital; on the other, from the rise of a revolutionary proletariat. “True” Socialism appeared to kill these two birds with one stone. It spread like an epidemic.

The robe of speculative cobwebs, embroidered with flowers of rhetoric, steeped in the dew of sickly sentiment, this transcendental robe in which the German Socialists wrapped their sorry “eternal truths”, all skin and bone, served to wonderfully increase the sale of their goods amongst such a public.

And on its part German Socialism recognised, more and more, its own calling as the bombastic representative of the petty-bourgeois Philistine.

It proclaimed the German nation to be the model nation, and the German petty Philistine to be the typical man. To every villainous meanness of this model man, it gave a hidden, higher, Socialistic interpretation, the exact contrary of its real character. It went to the extreme length of directly opposing the “brutally destructive” tendency of Communism, and of proclaiming its supreme and impartial contempt of all class struggles. With very few exceptions, all the so-called Socialist and Communist publications that now (1847) circulate in Germany belong to the domain of this foul and enervating literature. [9]

2. Conservative or Bourgeois Socialism

A part of the bourgeoisie is desirous of redressing social grievances in order to secure the continued existence of bourgeois society.

To this section belong economists, philanthropists, humanitarians, improvers of the condition of the working class, organizers of charity, members of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, temperance

fanatics, hole-and-corner reformers of every imaginable kind. This form of socialism has, moreover, been worked out into complete systems.

We may cite Proudhon's *Philosophie de la Misère* as an example of this form.

The Socialistic bourgeois want all the advantages of modern social conditions without the struggles and dangers necessarily resulting therefrom. They desire the existing state of society, minus its revolutionary and disintegrating elements. They wish for a bourgeoisie without a proletariat. The bourgeoisie naturally conceives the world in which it is supreme to be the best; and bourgeois Socialism develops this comfortable conception into various more or less complete systems. In requiring the proletariat to carry out such a system, and thereby to march straightway into the social New Jerusalem, it but requires in reality, that the proletariat should remain within the bounds of existing society, but should cast away all its hateful ideas concerning the bourgeoisie.

A second, and more practical, but less systematic, form of this Socialism sought to depreciate every revolutionary movement in the eyes of the working class by showing that no mere political reform, but only a change in the material conditions of existence, in economic relations, could be of any advantage to them. By changes in the material conditions of existence, this form of Socialism, however, by no means understands abolition of the bourgeois relations of production, an abolition that can be affected only by a revolution, but administrative reforms, based on the continued existence of these relations; reforms, therefore, that in no respect affect the relations between capital and labor, but, at the best, lessen the cost, and simplify the administrative work, of bourgeois government.

Bourgeois Socialism attains adequate expression when, and only when, it becomes a mere figure of speech.

Free trade: for the benefit of the working class. Protective duties: for the benefit of the working class. Prison Reform: for the benefit of the working class. This is the last word and the only seriously meant word of bourgeois socialism.

It is summed up in the phrase: the bourgeois is a bourgeois—for the benefit of the working class.

3. Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism

We do not refer here to that literature which, in every great modern revolution, has always given voice to the demands of the proletariat, such as the writings of Babeuf and others.

The first direct attempts of the proletariat to attain its own ends, made in times of universal excitement, when feudal society was being overthrown, necessarily failed, owing to the then undeveloped state of the proletariat, as well as to the absence of the economic conditions for its emancipation, conditions that had yet to be produced, and could be produced by the impending bourgeois epoch alone. The revolutionary literature that accompanied these first movements of the proletariat had necessarily a reactionary character. It inculcated universal asceticism and social leveling in its crudest form.

The Socialist and Communist systems, properly so called, those of Saint-Simon, Fourier, Owen, and others, spring into existence in the early undeveloped period, described above, of the struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie (see Section 1. Bourgeois and Proletarians).

The founders of these systems see, indeed, the class antagonisms, as well as the action of the decomposing elements in the prevailing form of society. But the proletariat, as yet in its infancy, offers to them the spectacle of a class without any historical initiative or any independent political movement.

Since the development of class antagonism keeps even pace with the development of industry, the economic situation, as they find it, does not as yet offer to them the material conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat. They therefore search after a new social science, after new social laws, that are to create these conditions.

Historical action is to yield to their personal inventive action; historically created conditions of emancipation to fantastic ones; and the gradual, spontaneous class organization of the proletariat to an organization of society especially contrived by these inventors. Future history resolves

itself, in their eyes, into the propaganda and the practical carrying out of their social plans.

In the formation of their plans, they are conscious of caring chiefly for the interests of the working class, as being the most suffering class. Only from the point of view of being the most suffering class does the proletariat exist for them.

The undeveloped state of the class struggle, as well as their own surroundings, causes Socialists of this kind to consider themselves far superior to all class antagonisms. They want to improve the condition of every member of society, even that of the most favored. Hence, they habitually appeal to society at large, without the distinction of class; nay, by preference, to the ruling class. For how can people, once they understand their system, fail to see in it the best possible plan for the best possible state of society?

Hence, they reject all political, and especially all revolutionary action; they wish to attain their ends by peaceful means, necessarily doomed to failure, and by the force of example, to pave the way for the new social Gospel.

Such fantastic pictures of future society, painted at a time when the proletariat is still in a very undeveloped state and has but a fantastic conception of its own position, correspond with the first instinctive yearnings of that class for a general reconstruction of society.

But these Socialist and Communist publications also contain a critical element. They attack every principle of existing society. Hence, they are full of the most valuable materials for the enlightenment of the working class. The practical measures proposed in them—such as the abolition of the distinction between town and country, of the family, of the carrying on of industries for the account of private individuals, and of the wage system, the proclamation of social harmony, the conversion of the function of the state into a more superintendence of production—all these proposals point solely to the disappearance of class antagonisms which were, at that time, only just cropping up, and which, in these publications, are recognised in their earliest indistinct and undefined forms only. These proposals, therefore, are of a purely Utopian character.

The significance of Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism bears an inverse relation to historical development. In proportion as the modern class struggle develops and takes definite shape, this fantastic standing apart from the contest, these fantastic attacks on it, lose all practical value and all theoretical justification. Therefore, although the originators of these systems were, in many respects, revolutionary, their disciples have, in every case, formed mere reactionary sects. They hold fast by the original views of their masters, in opposition to the progressive historical development of the proletariat. They, therefore, endeavor, and that consistently, to deaden the class struggle and to reconcile the class antagonisms. They still dream of experimental realization of their social Utopias, of founding isolated " phalansteres ", of establishing "Home Colonies", or setting up a "Little Icaria" [10] —duodecimo editions of the New Jerusalem—and to realize all these castles in the air, they are compelled to appeal to the feelings and purses of the bourgeois. By degrees, they sink into the category of the reactionary [or] conservative Socialists depicted above, differing from these only by more systematic pedantry, and by their fanatical and superstitious belief in the miraculous effects of their social science.

They, therefore, violently oppose all political action on the part of the working class; such action, according to them, can only result from blind unbelief in the new Gospel.
The Owenites in England, and the Fourierists in France, respectively, oppose the Chartists and the *Réformistes* .

Chapter 4: Position of the Communists in Relation to the Various Existing Opposition Parties

Section II has made clear the relations of the Communists to the existing working-class parties, such as the Chartists in England and the Agrarian Reformers in America.

The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement. In France, the Communists ally with the Social-Democrats [11] against the conservative and radical bourgeoisie, reserving, however, the right to take up a critical position in regard to phases and illusions traditionally handed down from the great Revolution.

In Switzerland, they support the Radicals, without losing sight of the fact that this party consists of antagonistic elements, partly of Democratic Socialists, in the French sense, partly of radical bourgeois.

In Poland, they support the party that insists on an agrarian revolution as the prime condition for national emancipation, that party which fomented the insurrection of Cracow in 1846.

In Germany, they fight with the bourgeoisie whenever it acts in a revolutionary way, against the absolute monarchy, the feudal squirearchy, and the petty bourgeoisie.

But they never cease, for a single instant, to instill into the working class the clearest possible recognition of the hostile antagonism between bourgeoisie and proletariat, in order that the German workers may straightway use, as so many weapons against the bourgeoisie, the social and political conditions that the bourgeoisie must necessarily introduce along with its supremacy, and in order that, after the fall of the reactionary classes in Germany, the fight against the bourgeoisie itself may immediately begin.

The Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany, because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution that is bound to be carried out under more advanced conditions of European civilisation and with a much more developed proletariat than that of England was in the seventeenth, and France in the

eighteenth century, and because the bourgeois revolution in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution.

In short, the Communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things.

In all these movements, they bring to the front, as the leading question in each, the property question, no matter what its degree of development at the time.

Finally, they labor everywhere for the union and agreement of the democratic parties of all countries.

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution.

The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

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[1] Lassalle personally, to us, always acknowledged himself to be a disciple of Marx, and, as such, stood on the ground of the Manifesto. But in his first public agitation, 1862-1864, he did not go beyond demanding co-operative workshops supported by state credit

[2] By bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage labor. By proletariat, the class of modern wage laborers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labor power in order to live. [Engels, 1888 English edition]

[3] That is, all written history. In 1847, the pre-history of society, the social organization existing previous to recorded history, all but unknown. Since then, August von Haxthausen (1792-1866) discovered common ownership of land in Russia, Georg Ludwig von Maurer proved it to be the social foundation from which all Teutonic races started in history, and, by and by, village communities were found to be, or to have been, the primitive form of society everywhere from India to Ireland. The inner organization of this primitive communistic society was laid bare, in its typical form, by Lewis Henry Morgan's (1818-1881) crowning discovery of the true nature of the gens and its relation to the tribe. With the dissolution of the primeval communities, society begins to be differentiated into separate and finally antagonistic classes. I have attempted to retrace this dissolution in The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State, second edition, Stuttgart, 1886. [Engels, 1888 English Edition and 1890 German Edition (with the last sentence omitted)]

[4] Guild-master, that is, a full member of a guild, a master within, not a head of a guild. [Engels, 1888 English Edition]

[5] This was the name given to their urban communities by the townsmen of Italy and France, after they had purchased or conquered their initial rights of self-government from their feudal lords. [Engels, 1890

German edition]

“Commune” was the name taken in France by the nascent towns even before they had conquered from their feudal lords and masters local self-government and political rights as the “Third Estate.” Generally speaking, for the economical development of the bourgeoisie, England is here taken as the typical country, for its political development, France. [Engels, 1888 English Edition]

[6] A reference to the movement for a reform of the electoral law which, under the pressure of the working class, was passed by the British House of Commons in 1831 and finally endorsed by the House of Lords in June, 1832. The reform was directed against monopoly rule of the landed and finance aristocracy and opened the way to Parliament for the representatives of the industrial bourgeoisie. Neither workers nor the petty-bourgeois were allowed electoral rights, despite assurances they would.

[7] Not the English Restoration (1660-1689), but the French Restoration (1814-1830). [Note by Engels to the English edition of 1888.]

[8] This applies chiefly to Germany, where the landed aristocracy and squirearchy have large portions of their estates cultivated for their own account by stewards, and are, moreover, extensive beetroot-sugar manufacturers and distillers of potato spirits. The wealthier British aristocracy are, as yet, rather above that; but they, too, know how to make up for declining rents by lending their names to floaters or more or less shady joint-stock companies. [Note by Engels to the English edition of 1888.]

[9] The revolutionary storm of 1848 swept away this whole shabby tendency and cured its protagonists of the desire to dabble in socialism. The chief representative and classical type of this tendency is Mr Karl Gruen. [Note by Engels to the German edition of 1890.]

[10] *Phalanstéres* were Socialist colonies on the plan of Charles Fourier; *Icaria* was the name given by Cabet to his Utopia and, later on, to his American Communist colony. [Note by Engels to the English edition of 1888.]

“Home Colonies” were what Owen called his Communist model societies. *Phalanstéres* was the name of the public palaces planned by Fourier. *Icaria* was the name given to the Utopian land of fancy, whose Communist institutions Cabet portrayed. [Note by Engels to the German edition of 1890.]

[11] The party then represented in Parliament by Ledru-Rollin, in literature by Louis Blanc, in the daily press by the *Réforme* . The name of Social-Democracy signifies, with these its inventors , a section of the Democratic or Republican Party more or less tinged with socialism. [Engels, English Edition 1888]

The State and Revolution

by V. I. Lenin, 1917

Prefaces

Preface to the First Edition

The question of the state is now acquiring particular importance both in theory and in practical politics. The imperialist war has immensely accelerated and intensified the process of transformation of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism. The monstrous oppression of the working people by the state, which is merging more and more with the all-powerful capitalist associations, is becoming increasingly monstrous. The advanced countries—we mean their hinterland—are becoming military convict prisons for the workers.

The unprecedented horrors and miseries of the protracted war are making the people's position unbearable and increasing their anger. The world proletarian revolution is clearly maturing. The question of its relation to the state is acquiring practical importance.

The elements of opportunism that accumulated over the decades of comparatively peaceful development have given rise to the trend of social-chauvinism which dominated the official socialist parties throughout the world. This trend—socialism in words and chauvinism in deeds (Plekhanov, Potresov, Breshkovskaya, Rubanovich, and, in a slightly veiled form, Tsereteli, Chernov and Co. in Russia; Scheidemann. Legien, David and others in Germany; Renaudel, Guesde and Vandervelde in France and Belgium; Hyndman and the Fabians [1] in England, etc., etc.)—is conspicuous for the base, servile adaptation of the "leaders of socialism" to the interests not only of "their" national bourgeoisie, but of "their" state, for the majority of the so-called Great Powers have long been exploiting and enslaving a whole number of small and weak nations. And the imperialist

war is a war for the division and redivision of this kind of booty. The struggle to free the working people from the influence of the bourgeoisie in general, and of the imperialist bourgeoisie in particular, is impossible without a struggle against opportunist prejudices concerning the "state".

First of all we examine the theory of Marx and Engels of the state, and dwell in particular detail on those aspects of this theory which are ignored or have been distorted by the opportunists. Then we deal specially with the one who is chiefly responsible for these distortions, Karl Kautsky, the best-known leader of the Second International (1889-1914), which has met with such miserable bankruptcy in the present war. Lastly, we sum up the main results of the experience of the Russian revolutions of 1905 and particularly of 1917. Apparently, the latter is now (early August 1917) completing the first stage of its development; but this revolution as a whole can only be understood as a link in a chain of socialist proletarian revolutions being caused by the imperialist war. The question of the relation of the socialist proletarian revolution to the state, therefore, is acquiring not only practical political importance, but also the significance of a most urgent problem of the day, the problem of explaining to the masses what they will have to do before long to free themselves from capitalist tyranny.

The Author
August 1917

Preface to the Second Edition

The present, second edition is published virtually unaltered, except that section 3 had been added to Chapter II.

The Author
December 17, 1918

Chapter 1: Class Society and State

1. The State: A Product of the Irreconcilability of Class Antagonisms

What is now happening to Marx's theory has, in the course of history, happened repeatedly to the theories of revolutionary thinkers and leaders of oppressed classes fighting for emancipation. During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes constantly hounded them, received their theories with the most savage malice, the most furious hatred and the most unscrupulous campaigns of lies and slander. After their death, attempts are made to convert them into harmless icons, to canonize them, so to say, and to hallow their *names* to a certain extent for the "consolation" of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping the latter, while at the same time robbing the revolutionary theory of its *substance* , blunting its revolutionary edge and vulgarizing it. Today, the bourgeoisie and the opportunists within the labor movement concur in this doctoring of Marxism. They omit, obscure, or distort the revolutionary side of this theory, its revolutionary soul. They push to the foreground and extol what is or seems acceptable to the bourgeoisie. All the social-chauvinists are now "Marxists" (don't laugh!). And more and more frequently German bourgeois scholars, only yesterday specialists in the annihilation of Marxism, are speaking of the "national-German" Marx, who, they claim, educated the labor unions which are so splendidly organized for the purpose of waging a predatory war!

In these circumstances, in view of the unprecedently wide-spread distortion of Marxism, our prime task is to reestablish what Marx really taught on the subject of the state. This will necessitate a number of long quotations from the works of Marx and Engels themselves. Of course, long quotations will render the text cumbersome and not help at all to make it popular reading, but we cannot possibly dispense with them. All, or at any rate all the most essential passages in the works of Marx and Engels on the subject of the state must by all means be quoted as fully as possible so that the reader may form an independent opinion of the totality of the views of the founders of scientific socialism, and of the evolution of those views, and so that their

distortion by the “Kautskyism” now prevailing may be documentarily proved and clearly demonstrated.

Let us begin with the most popular of Engels’ works, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, the sixth edition of which was published in Stuttgart as far back as 1894. We have to translate the quotations from the German originals, as the Russian translations, while very numerous, are for the most part either incomplete or very unsatisfactory.

Summing up his historical analysis, Engels says:

“The state is, therefore, by no means a power forced on society from without; just as little is it ’the reality of the ethical idea’, ’the image and reality of reason’, as Hegel maintains. Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it has split into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, these classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above society, that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of ’order’; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state.” (p. 177-78, sixth edition) [2]

This expresses with perfect clarity the basic idea of Marxism with regard to the historical role and the meaning of the state. The state is a product and a manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms. The state arises where, when and insofar as class antagonism objectively cannot be reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that the class antagonisms are irreconcilable.

It is on this most important and fundamental point that the distortion of Marxism, proceeding along two main lines, begins.

On the one hand, the bourgeois, and particularly the petty-bourgeois, ideologists, compelled under the weight of indisputable historical facts to admit that the state only exists where there are class antagonisms and a class struggle, “correct” Marx in such a way as to make it appear that the

state is an organ for the reconciliation of classes. According to Marx, the state could neither have arisen nor maintained itself had it been possible to reconcile classes. From what the petty-bourgeois and philistine professors and publicists say, with quite frequent and benevolent references to Marx, it appears that the state does reconcile classes. According to Marx, the state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another; it is the creation of "order", which legalizes and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between classes. In the opinion of the petty-bourgeois politicians, however, order means the reconciliation of classes, and not the oppression of one class by another; to alleviate the conflict means reconciling classes and not depriving the oppressed classes of definite means and methods of struggle to overthrow the oppressors.

For instance, when, in the revolution of 1917, the question of the significance and role of the state arose in all its magnitude as a practical question demanding immediate action, and, moreover, action on a mass scale, all the Social-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks descended at once to the petty-bourgeois theory that the "state" "reconciles" classes. Innumerable resolutions and articles by politicians of both these parties are thoroughly saturated with this petty-bourgeois and philistine "reconciliation" theory. That the state is an organ of the rule of a definite class which cannot be reconciled with its antipode (the class opposite to it) is something the petty-bourgeois democrats will never be able to understand. Their attitude to the state is one of the most striking manifestations of the fact that our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are not socialists at all (a point that we Bolsheviks have always maintained), but petty-bourgeois democrats using near-socialist phraseology.

On the other hand, the " Kautskyite " distortion of Marxism is far more subtle. "Theoretically", it is not denied that the state is an organ of class rule, or that class antagonisms are irreconcilable. But what is overlooked or glossed over is this: if the state is the product of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms, if it is a power standing above society and "alienating itself more and more from it", it is clear that the liberation of the oppressed class is impossible not only without a violent revolution, but also without the destruction of the apparatus of state power which was created by the ruling class and which is the embodiment of this "alienation". As we shall see later, Marx very explicitly drew this theoretically self-evident conclusion on

the strength of a concrete historical analysis of the tasks of the revolution. And—as we shall show in detail further on—it is this conclusion which Kautsky has “forgotten” and distorted.

2. Special Bodies of Armed Men, Prisons, etc.

Engels continues:

“As distinct from the old gentile [tribal or clan] order, [3] the state, first, divides its subjects according to territory....”

This division seems “natural” to us, but it costs a prolonged struggle against the old organization according to generations or tribes.

“The second distinguishing feature is the establishment of a public power which no longer directly coincides with the population organizing itself as an armed force. This special, public power is necessary because a self-acting armed organization of the population has become impossible since the split into classes.... This public power exists in every state; it consists not merely of armed men but also of material adjuncts, prisons, and institutions of coercion of all kinds, of which gentile [clan] society knew nothing...."

Engels elucidates the concept of the “power” which is called the state, a power which arose from society but places itself above it and alienates itself more and more from it. What does this power mainly consist of? It consists of special bodies of armed men having prisons, etc., at their command.

We are justified in speaking of special bodies of armed men, because the public power which is an attribute of every state “does not directly coincide” with the armed population, with its “self-acting armed organization".

Like all great revolutionary thinkers, Engels tries to draw the attention of the class-conscious workers to what prevailing philistinism regards as least worthy of attention, as the most habitual thing, hallowed by prejudices that are not only deep-rooted but, one might say, petrified. A standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power. But how can it be otherwise?

From the viewpoint of the vast majority of Europeans of the end of the 19th century, whom Engels was addressing, and who had not gone through or

closely observed a single great revolution, it could not have been otherwise. They could not understand at all what a “self-acting armed organization of the population” was. When asked why it became necessary to have special bodies of armed men placed above society and alienating themselves from it (police and a standing army), the West-European and Russian philistines are inclined to utter a few phrases borrowed from Spencer or Mikhailovsky, to refer to the growing complexity of social life, the differentiation of functions, and so on.

Such a reference seems “scientific”, and effectively lulls the ordinary person to sleep by obscuring the important and basic fact, namely, the split of society into irreconcilable antagonistic classes.

Were it not for this split, the “self-acting armed organization of the population” would differ from the primitive organization of a stick-wielding herd of monkeys, or of primitive men, or of men united in clans, by its complexity, its high technical level, and so on. But such an organization would still be possible.

It is impossible because civilized society is split into antagonistic, and, moreover, irreconcilably antagonistic classes, whose “self-acting” arming would lead to an armed struggle between them. A state arises, a special power is created, special bodies of armed men, and every revolution, by destroying the state apparatus, shows us the naked class struggle, clearly shows us how the ruling class strives to restore the special bodies of armed men which serve it, and how the oppressed class strives to create a new organization of this kind, capable of serving the exploited instead of the exploiters.

In the above argument, Engels raises theoretically the very same question which every great revolution raises before us in practice, palpably and, what is more, on a scale of mass action, namely, the question of the relationship between “special” bodies of armed men and the “self-acting armed organization of the population". We shall see how this question is specifically illustrated by the experience of the European and Russian revolutions.

But to return to Engels’ exposition.

He points out that sometimes—in certain parts of North America, for example—this public power is weak (he has in mind a rare exception in capitalist society, and those parts of North America in its pre-imperialist days where the free colonists predominated), but that, generally speaking, it grows stronger:

“It [the public power] grows stronger, however, in proportion as class antagonisms within the state become more acute, and as adjacent states become larger and more populous. We have only to look at our present-day Europe, where class struggle and rivalry in conquest have tuned up the public power to such a pitch that it threatens to swallow the whole of society and even the state."

This was written not later than the early nineties of the last century, Engels’ last preface being dated June 16, 1891. The turn towards imperialism—meaning the complete domination of the trusts, the omnipotence of the big banks, a grand-scale colonial policy, and so forth—was only just beginning in France, and was even weaker in North America and in Germany. Since then “rivalry in conquest” has taken a gigantic stride, all the more because by the beginning of the second decade of the 20th century the world had been completely divided up among these “rivals in conquest”, i.e., among the predatory Great Powers. Since then, military and naval armaments have grown fantastically and the predatory war of 1914-17 for the domination of the world by Britain or Germany, for the division of the spoils, has brought the “swallowing” of all the forces of society by the rapacious state power close to complete catastrophe.

Engels’ could, as early as 1891, point to “rivalry in conquest” as one of the most important distinguishing features of the foreign policy of the Great Powers, while the social-chauvinist scoundrels have ever since 1914, when this rivalry, many time intensified, gave rise to an imperialist war, been covering up the defense of the predatory interests of “their own” bourgeoisie with phrases about “defense of the fatherland”, “defense of the republic and the revolution”, etc.!

3. The State: an Instrument for the Exploitation of the Oppressed Class

The maintenance of the special public power standing above society requires taxes and state loans.

“Having public power and the right to levy taxes,” Engels writes, “the officials now stand, as organs of society, above society. The free, voluntary respect that was accorded to the organs of the gentile [clan] constitution does not satisfy them, even if they could gain it....” Special laws are enacted proclaiming the sanctity and immunity of the officials. “The shabbiest police servant” has more “authority” than the representative of the clan, but even the head of the military power of a civilized state may well envy the elder of a clan the “unrestrained respect” of society.

The question of the privileged position of the officials as organs of state power is raised here. The main point indicated is: what is it that places them above society? We shall see how this theoretical question was answered in practice by the Paris Commune in 1871 and how it was obscured from a reactionary standpoint by Kautsky in 1912.

“Because the state arose from the need to hold class antagonisms in check, but because it arose, at the same time, in the midst of the conflict of these classes, it is, as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class....” The ancient and feudal states were organs for the exploitation of the slaves and serfs; likewise, “the modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage-labor by capital. By way of exception, however, periods occur in which the warring classes balance each other so nearly that the state power as ostensible mediator acquires, for the moment, a certain degree of independence of both....” Such were the absolute monarchies of the 17th and 18th centuries, the Bonapartism of the First and Second Empires in France, and the Bismarck regime in Germany.

Such, we may add, is the Kerensky government in republican Russia since it began to persecute the revolutionary proletariat, at a moment when, owing to the leadership of the petty-bourgeois democrats, the Soviets have already become impotent, while the bourgeoisie are not yet strong enough simply to disperse them.

In a democratic republic, Engels continues, “wealth exercises its power indirectly, but all the more surely”, first, by means of the “direct corruption

of officials" (America); secondly, by means of an "alliance of the government and the Stock Exchange" (France and America).

At present, imperialism and the domination of the banks have "developed" into an exceptional art both these methods of upholding and giving effect to the omnipotence of wealth in democratic republics of all descriptions. Since, for instance, in the very first months of the Russian democratic republic, one might say during the honeymoon of the "socialist" S.R.s and Mensheviks joined in wedlock to the bourgeoisie, in the coalition government. Mr. Palchinsky obstructed every measure intended for curbing the capitalists and their marauding practices, their plundering of the state by means of war contracts; and since later on Mr. Palchinsky, upon resigning from the Cabinet (and being, of course, replaced by another quite similar Palchinsky), was "rewarded" by the capitalists with a lucrative job with a salary of 120,000 rubles per annum—what would you call that? Direct or indirect bribery? An alliance of the government and the syndicates, or "merely" friendly relations? What role do the Chernovs, Tseretelis, Avksentyevs and Skobelevs play? Are they the "direct" or only the indirect allies of the millionaire treasury-looters?

Another reason why the omnipotence of "wealth" is more certain in a democratic republic is that it does not depend on defects in the political machinery or on the faulty political shell of capitalism. A democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism, and, therefore, once capital has gained possession of this very best shell (through the Palchinskys, Chernovs, Tseretelis and Co.), it establishes its power so securely, so firmly, that no change of persons, institutions or parties in the bourgeois-democratic republic can shake it.

We must also note that Engels is most explicit in calling universal suffrage as well an instrument of bourgeois rule. Universal suffrage, he says, obviously taking account of the long experience of German Social-Democracy, is

"the gauge of the maturity of the working class. It cannot and never will be anything more in the present-day state."

The petty-bourgeois democrats, such as our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and also their twin brothers, all the social-chauvinists and

opportunists of Western Europe, expect just this “more” from universal suffrage. They themselves share, and instill into the minds of the people, the false notion that universal suffrage “in the present-day state” is really capable of revealing the will of the majority of the working people and of securing its realization.

Here, we can only indicate this false notion, only point out that Engels’ perfectly clear statement is distorted at every step in the propaganda and agitation of the “official” (i.e., opportunist) socialist parties. A detailed exposure of the utter falsity of this notion which Engels brushes aside here is given in our further account of the views of Marx and Engels on the “present-day” state.

Engels gives a general summary of his views in the most popular of his works in the following words:

“The state, then, has not existed from all eternity. There have been societies that did without it, that had no idea of the state and state power. At a certain stage of economic development, which was necessarily bound up with the split of society into classes, the state became a necessity owing to this split. We are now rapidly approaching a stage in the development of production at which the existence of these classes not only will have ceased to be a necessity, but will become a positive hindrance to production. They will fall as they arose at an earlier stage. Along with them the state will inevitably fall. Society, which will reorganize production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers, will put the whole machinery of state where it will then belong: into a museum of antiquities, by the side of the spinning-wheel and the bronze ax."

We do not often come across this passage in the propaganda and agitation literature of the present-day Social-Democrats. Even when we do come across it, it is mostly quoted in the same manner as one bows before an icon, i.e., it is done to show official respect for Engels, and no attempt is made to gauge the breadth and depth of the revolution that this relegating of “the whole machinery of state to a museum of antiquities” implies. In most cases we do not even find an understanding of what Engels calls the state machine.

4. The “Withering Away” of the State, and Violent Revolution

Engels' words regarding the "withering away" of the state are so widely known, they are often quoted, and so clearly reveal the essence of the customary adaptation of Marxism to opportunism that we must deal with them in detail. We shall quote the whole argument from which they are taken.

"The proletariat seizes from state power and turns the means of production into state property to begin with. But thereby it abolishes itself as the proletariat, abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, and also abolishes the state as state. Society thus far, operating amid class antagonisms, needed the state, that is, an organization of the particular exploiting class, for the maintenance of its external conditions of production, and, therefore, especially, for the purpose of forcibly keeping the exploited class in the conditions of oppression determined by the given mode of production (slavery, serfdom or bondage, wage-labor). The state was the official representative of society as a whole, its concentration in a visible corporation. But it was this only insofar as it was the state of that class which itself represented, for its own time, society as a whole: in ancient times, the state of slave-owning citizens; in the Middle Ages, of the feudal nobility; in our own time, of the bourgeoisie. When at last it becomes the real representative of the whole of society, it renders itself unnecessary. As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection, as soon as class rule, and the individual struggle for existence based upon the present anarchy in production, with the collisions and excesses arising from this struggle, are removed, nothing more remains to be held in subjection—nothing necessitating a special coercive force, a state. The first act by which the state really comes forward as the representative of the whole of society —the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society —is also its last independent act as a state. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies down of itself. The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The state is not 'abolished'. It withers away. This gives the measure of the value of the phrase 'a free people's state', both as to its justifiable use for a long time from an agitational point of view, and as to its ultimate scientific insufficiency; and also of the so-called anarchists' demand that the state be

abolished overnight."(Herr Eugen Duhring's Revolution in Science [Anti-Duhring], p. 301-03, third German edition.) [4]

It is safe to say that of this argument of Engels', which is so remarkably rich in ideas, only one point has become an integral part of socialist thought among modern socialist parties, namely, that according to Marx that state "withers away"—as distinct from the anarchist doctrine of the "abolition" of the state. To prune Marxism to such an extent means reducing it to opportunism, for this "interpretation" only leaves a vague notion of a slow, even, gradual change, of absence of leaps and storms, of absence of revolution. The current, widespread, popular, if one may say so, conception of the "withering away" of the state undoubtedly means obscuring, if not repudiating, revolution.

Such an "interpretation", however, is the crudest distortion of Marxism, advantageous only to the bourgeoisie. In its theory, it is based on disregard for the most important circumstances and considerations indicated in, say, Engels' "summary" argument we have just quoted in full.

In the first place , at the very outset of his argument, Engels says that, in seizing state power, the proletariat thereby "abolishes the state as state". It is not done to ponder over the meaning of this. Generally, it is either ignored altogether, or is considered to be something in the nature of "Hegelian weakness" on Engels' part. As a matter of fact, however, these words briefly express the experience of one of the greatest proletarian revolutions, the Paris Commune of 1871, of which we shall speak in greater detail in its proper place. As a matter of fact, Engels speaks here of the proletariat revolution "abolishing" the bourgeois state, while the words about the state withering away refer to the remnants of the proletarian state after the socialist revolution. According to Engels, the bourgeois state does not "wither away", but is "abolished" by the proletariat in the course of the revolution. What withers away after this revolution is the proletarian state or semi-state.

Secondly , the state is a "special coercive force". Engels gives this splendid and extremely profound definition here with the utmost lucidity. And from it follows that the "special coercive force" for the suppression of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, of millions of working people by handfuls of

the rich, must be replaced by a “special coercive force” for the suppression of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat (the dictatorship of the proletariat). This is precisely what is meant by “abolition of the state as state". This is precisely the “act” of taking possession of the means of production in the name of society. And it is self-evident that such a replacement of one (bourgeois) “special force” by another (proletarian) “special force” cannot possibly take place in the form of “withering away".

Thirdly , in speaking of the state “withering away”, and the even more graphic and colorful “dying down of itself”, Engels refers quite clearly and definitely to the period after “the state has taken possession of the means of production in the name of the whole of society”, that is, after the socialist revolution. We all know that the political form of the “state” at that time is the most complete democracy. But it never enters the head of any of the opportunists, who shamelessly distort Marxism, that Engels is consequently speaking here of democracy “dying down of itself”, or “withering away". This seems very strange at first sight. But it is “incomprehensible” only to those who have not thought about democracy also being a state and, consequently, also disappearing when the state disappears. Revolution alone can “abolish” the bourgeois state. The state in general, i.e., the most complete democracy, can only “wither away".

Fourthly , after formulating his famous proposition that “the state withers away”, Engels at once explains specifically that this proposition is directed against both the opportunists and the anarchists. In doing this, Engels puts in the forefront that conclusion, drawn from the proposition that “the state withers away”, which is directed against the opportunists.

One can wager that out of every 10,000 persons who have read or heard about the “withering away” of the state, 9,990 are completely unaware, or do not remember, that Engels directed his conclusions from that proposition not against anarchists alone. And of the remaining 10, probably nine do not know the meaning of a “free people’s state” or why an attack on this slogan means an attack on opportunists. This is how history is written! This is how a great revolutionary teaching is imperceptibly falsified and adapted to prevailing philistinism. The conclusion directed against the anarchists has been repeated thousands of times; it has been vulgarized, and rammed into people’s heads in the shallowest form, and has acquired the strength of a

prejudice, whereas the conclusion directed against the opportunists has been obscured and “forgotten”!

The “free people’s state” was a programme demand and a catchword current among the German Social-Democrats in the seventies. This catchword is devoid of all political content except that it describes the concept of democracy in a pompous philistine fashion. Insofar as it hinted in a legally permissible manner at a democratic republic, Engels was prepared to “justify” its use “for a time” from an agitational point of view. But it was an opportunist catchword, for it amounted to nothing more than prettifying bourgeois democracy, and was also a failure to understand the socialist criticism of the state in general. We are in favor of a democratic republic as the best form of state for the proletariat under capitalism. But we have no right to forget that wage slavery is the lot of the people even in the most democratic bourgeois republic. Furthermore, every state is a “special force” for the suppression of the oppressed class. Consequently, every state is not “free” and not a “people’s state". Marx and Engels explained this repeatedly to their party comrades in the seventies.

Fifthly , the same work of Engels’, whose arguments about the withering away of the state everyone remembers, also contains an argument of the significance of violent revolution. Engels’ historical analysis of its role becomes a veritable panegyric on violent revolution. This, “no one remembers". It is not done in modern socialist parties to talk or even think about the significance of this idea, and it plays no part whatever in their daily propaganda and agitation among the people. And yet it is inseparably bound up with the ”withering away” of the state into one harmonious whole.

Here is Engels’ argument:

“...That force, however, plays yet another role [other than that of a diabolical power] in history, a revolutionary role; that, in the words of Marx, it is the midwife of every old society which is pregnant with a new one, that it is the instrument with which social movement forces its way through and shatters the dead, fossilized political forms—of this there is not a word in Herr Duhring. It is only with sighs and groans that he admits the possibility that force will perhaps be necessary for the overthrow of an economy based on exploitation—unfortunately, because all use of force

demoralizes, he says, the person who uses it. And this in Germany, where a violent collision—which may, after all, be forced on the people—would at least have the advantage of wiping out the servility which has penetrated the nation's mentality following the humiliation of the Thirty Years' War. [5] And this person's mode of thought—dull, insipid, and impotent—presumes to impose itself on the most revolutionary party that history has ever known!" (p. 193, third German edition, Part II, end of Chap.IV)

How can this panegyric on violent revolution, which Engels insistently brought to the attention of the German Social-Democrats between 1878 and 1894, i.e., right up to the time of his death, be combined with the theory of the "withering away" of the state to form a single theory?

Usually the two are combined by means of eclecticism, by an unprincipled or sophistic selection made arbitrarily (or to please the powers that be) of first one, then another argument, and in 99 cases out of 100, if not more, it is the idea of the "withering away" that is placed in the forefront. Dialectics are replaced by eclecticism—this is the most usual, the most wide-spread practice to be met with in present-day official Social-Democratic literature in relation to Marxism. This sort of substitution is, of course, nothing new; it was observed even in the history of classical Greek philosophy. In falsifying Marxism in opportunist fashion, the substitution of eclecticism for dialectics is the easiest way of deceiving the people. It gives an illusory satisfaction; it seems to take into account all sides of the process, all trends of development, all the conflicting influences, and so forth, whereas in reality it provides no integral and revolutionary conception of the process of social development at all.

We have already said above, and shall show more fully later, that the theory of Marx and Engels of the inevitability of a violent revolution refers to the bourgeois state. The latter cannot be superseded by the proletarian state (the dictatorship of the proletariat) through the process of "withering away", but, as a general rule, only through a violent revolution. The panegyric Engels sang in its honor, and which fully corresponds to Marx's repeated statements (see the concluding passages of *The Poverty of Philosophy* [6] and the *Communist Manifesto* , [7] with their proud and open proclamation of the inevitability of a violent revolution; see what Marx wrote nearly 30 years later, in criticizing the Gotha Programme of 1875, [8] when he

mercilessly castigated the opportunist character of that programme)—this panegyric is by no means a mere “impulse”, a mere declamation or a polemical sally. The necessity of systematically imbuing the masses with this and precisely this view of violent revolution lies at the root of the entire theory of Marx and Engels. The betrayal of their theory by the now prevailing social-chauvinist and Kautskyite trends expresses itself strikingly in both these trends ignoring such propaganda and agitation.

The supersession of the bourgeois state by the proletarian state is impossible without a violent revolution. The abolition of the proletarian state, i.e., of the state in general, is impossible except through the process of “withering away".

A detailed and concrete elaboration of these views was given by Marx and Engels when they studied each particular revolutionary situation, when they analyzed the lessons of the experience of each particular revolution. We shall now pass to this, undoubtedly the most important, part of their theory.

Chapter 2: The Experience of 1848-51

1. The Eve of Revolution

The first works of mature Marxism— *The Poverty of Philosophy* and the *Communist Manifesto* —appeared just on the eve of the revolution of 1848. For this reason, in addition to presenting the general principles of Marxism, they reflect to a certain degree the concrete revolutionary situation of the time. It will, therefore, be more expedient, perhaps, to examine what the authors of these works said about the state immediately before they drew conclusions from the experience of the years 1848-51.

In *The Poverty of Philosophy* , Marx wrote:

"The working class, in the course of development, will substitute for the old bourgeois society an association which will preclude classes and their antagonism, and there will be no more political power groups, since the political power is precisely the official expression of class antagonism in bourgeois society." (p. 182, German edition, 1885) [9]

It is instructive to compare this general exposition of the idea of the state disappearing after the abolition of classes with the exposition contained in the *Communist Manifesto* , written by Marx and Engels a few months later —in November 1847, to be exact:

"...In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat....

"...We have seen above that the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class to win the battle of democracy.

"The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degree, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class;

and to increase the total productive forces as rapidly as possible." (p. 31 and 37, seventh German edition, 1906) [10]

Here we have a formulation of one of the most remarkable and most important ideas of Marxism on the subject of the state, namely, the idea of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" (as Marx and Engels began to call it after the Paris Commune); and, also, a highly interesting definition of the state, which is also one of the "forgotten words" of Marxism: "the state, i.e., the proletariat organized as the ruling class."

This definition of the state has never been explained in the prevailing propaganda and agitation literature of the official Social-Democratic parties. More than that, it has been deliberately ignored, for it is absolutely irreconcilable with reformism, and is a slap in the face for the common opportunist prejudices and philistine illusions about the "peaceful development of democracy".

The proletariat needs the state—this is repeated by all the opportunists, social-chauvinists and Kautskyites, who assure us that this is what Marx taught. But they “forget” to add that, in the first place, according to Marx, the proletariat needs only a state which is withering away, i.e., a state so constituted that it begins to wither away immediately, and cannot but wither away. And, secondly, the working people need a "state, i.e., the proletariat organized as the ruling class".

The state is a special organization of force: it is an organization of violence for the suppression of some class. What class must the proletariat suppress? Naturally, only the exploiting class, i.e., the bourgeoisie. The working people need the state only to suppress the resistance of the exploiters, and only the proletariat can direct this suppression, can carry it out. For the proletariat is the only class that is consistently revolutionary, the only class that can unite all the working and exploited people in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, in completely removing it.

The exploiting classes need political rule to maintain exploitation, i.e., in the selfish interests of an insignificant minority against the vast majority of all people. The exploited classes need political rule in order to completely abolish all exploitation, i.e., in the interests of the vast majority of the

people, and against the insignificant minority consisting of the modern slave-owners—the landowners and capitalists.

The petty-bourgeois democrats, those sham socialists who replaced the class struggle by dreams of class harmony, even pictured the socialist transformation in a dreamy fashion—not as the overthrow of the rule of the exploiting class, but as the peaceful submission of the minority to the majority which has become aware of its aims. This petty-bourgeois utopia, which is inseparable from the idea of the state being above classes, led in practice to the betrayal of the interests of the working classes, as was shown, for example, by the history of the French revolutions of 1848 and 1871, and by the experience of "socialist" participation in bourgeois Cabinets in Britain, France, Italy and other countries at the turn of the century.

All his life Marx fought against this petty-bourgeois socialism, now revived in Russia by the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties. He developed his theory of the class struggle consistently, down to the theory of political power, of the state.

The overthrow of bourgeois rule can be accomplished only by the proletariat, the particular class whose economic conditions of existence prepare it for this task and provide it with the possibility and the power to perform it. While the bourgeoisie break up and disintegrate the peasantry and all the petty-bourgeois groups, they weld together, unite and organize the proletariat. Only the proletariat—by virtue of the economic role it plays in large-scale production—is capable of being the leader of all the working and exploited people, whom the bourgeoisie exploit, oppress and crush, often not less but more than they do the proletarians, but who are incapable of waging an independent struggle for their emancipation.

The theory of class struggle, applied by Marx to the question of the state and the socialist revolution, leads as a matter of course to the recognition of the political rule of the proletariat, of its dictatorship, i.e., of undivided power directly backed by the armed force of the people. The overthrow of the bourgeoisie can be achieved only by the proletariat becoming the ruling class, capable of crushing the inevitable and desperate resistance of the bourgeoisie, and of organizing all the working and exploited people for the new economic system.

The proletariat needs state power, a centralized organization of force, an organization of violence, both to crush the resistance of the exploiters and to lead the enormous mass of the population—the peasants, the petty bourgeoisie, and semi-proletarians—in the work of organizing a socialist economy.

By educating the workers' party, Marxism educates the vanguard of the proletariat, capable of assuming power and leading the whole people to socialism, of directing and organizing the new system, of being the teacher, the guide, the leader of all the working and exploited people in organizing their social life without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie. By contrast, the opportunism now prevailing trains the members of the workers' party to be the representatives of the better-paid workers, who lose touch with the masses, "get along" fairly well under capitalism, and sell their birthright for a mass of pottage, i.e., renounce their role as revolutionary leaders of the people against the bourgeoisie.

Marx's theory of "the state, i.e., the proletariat organized as the ruling class", is inseparably bound up with the whole of his doctrine of the revolutionary role of the proletariat in history. The culmination of this rule is the proletarian dictatorship, the political rule of the proletariat.

But since the proletariat needs the state as a special form of organization of violence against the bourgeoisie, the following conclusion suggests itself: is it conceivable that such an organization can be created without first abolishing, destroying the state machine created by the bourgeoisie for themselves? The *Communist Manifesto* leads straight to this conclusion, and it is of this conclusion that Marx speaks when summing up the experience of the revolution of 1848-51.

2. The Revolution Summed Up

Marx sums up his conclusions from the revolution of 1848-51, on the subject of the state we are concerned with, in the following argument contained in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* :

"But the revolution is throughgoing . It is still journeying through purgatory. It does its work methodically. By December 2, 1851 [the day of Louis Bonaparte's coup d'etat], it had completed one half of its preparatory work.

It is now completing the other half. First it perfected the parliamentary power, in order to be able to overthrow it. Now that it has attained this, it is perfecting the executive power, reducing it to its purest expression, isolating it, setting it up against itself as the sole object, in order to concentrate all its forces of destruction against it. And when it has done this second half of its preliminary work, Europe will leap from its seat and exultantly exclaim: well grubbed, old mole!

"This executive power with its enormous bureaucratic and military organization, with its vast and ingenious state machinery, with a host of officials numbering half a million, besides an army of another half million, this appalling parasitic body, which enmeshes the body of French society and chokes all its pores, sprang up in the days of the absolute monarchy, with the decay of the feudal system, which it helped to hasten." The first French Revolution developed centralization, "but at the same time" it increased "the extent, the attributes and the number of agents of governmental power. Napoleon completed this state machinery". The legitimate monarchy and the July monarchy "added nothing but a greater division of labor"....

"... Finally, in its struggle against the revolution, the parliamentary republic found itself compelled to strengthen, along with repressive measures, the resources and centralization of governmental power. All revolutions perfected this machine instead of smashing it. The parties that contended in turn for domination regarded the possession of this huge state edifice as the principal spoils of the victor." (The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte p. 98-99, fourth edition, Hamburg, 1907) [11]

In this remarkable argument, Marxism takes a tremendous step forward compared with the *Communist Manifesto* . In the latter, the question of the state is still treated in an extremely abstract manner, in the most general terms and expressions. In the above-quoted passage, the question is treated in a concrete manner, and the conclusion is extremely precise, definite, practical and palpable: all previous revolutions perfected the state machine, whereas it must be broken, smashed.

This conclusion is the chief and fundamental point in the Marxist theory of the state. And it is precisely this fundamental point which has been

completely ignored by the dominant official Social-Democratic parties and, indeed, distorted (as we shall see later) by the foremost theoretician of the Second International, Karl Kautsky.

The *Communist Manifesto* gives a general summary of history, which compels us to regard the state as the organ of class rule and leads us to the inevitable conclusion that the proletariat cannot overthrow the bourgeoisie without first winning political power, without attaining political supremacy, without transforming the state into the "proletariat organized as the ruling class"; and that this proletarian state will begin to wither away immediately after its victory because the state is unnecessary and cannot exist in a society in which there are no class antagonisms. The question as to how, from the point of view of historical development, the replacement of the bourgeois by the proletarian state is to take place is not raised here.

This is the question Marx raises and answers in 1852. True to his philosophy of dialectical materialism, Marx takes as his basis the historical experience of the great years of revolution, 1848 to 1851. Here, as everywhere else, his theory is a summing up of experience, illuminated by a profound philosophical conception of the world and a rich knowledge of history.

The problem of the state is put specifically: How did the bourgeois state, the state machine necessary for the rule of the bourgeoisie, come into being historically? What changes did it undergo, what evolution did it perform in the course of bourgeois revolutions and in the face of the independent actions of the oppressed classes? What are the tasks of the proletariat in relation to this state machine?

The centralized state power that is peculiar to bourgeois society came into being in the period of the fall of absolutism. Two institutions most characteristic of this state machine are the bureaucracy and the standing army. In their works, Marx and Engels repeatedly show that the bourgeoisie are connected with these institutions by thousands of threads. Every worker's experience illustrates this connection in an extremely graphic and impressive manner. From its own bitter experience, the working class learns to recognize this connection. That is why it so easily grasps and so firmly learns the doctrine which shows the inevitability of this connection, a doctrine which the petty-bourgeois democrats either ignorantly and

flippantly deny, or still more flippantly admit "in general", while forgetting to draw appropriate practical conclusions.

The bureaucracy and the standing army are a “parasite” on the body of bourgeois society—a parasite created by the internal antagonisms which rend that society, but a parasite which “chokes ” all its vital pores. The Kautskyite opportunism now prevailing in official Social-Democracy considers the view that the state is a parasitic organism to be the peculiar and exclusive attribute of anarchism. It goes without saying that this distortion of Marxism is of vast advantage to those philistines who have reduced socialism to the unheard-of disgrace of justifying and prettifying the imperialist war by applying to it the concept of "defense of the fatherland"; but it is unquestionably a distortion, nevertheless.

The development, perfection, and strengthening of the bureaucratic and military apparatus proceeded during all the numerous bourgeois revolutions which Europe has witnessed since the fall of feudalism. In particular, it is the petty bourgeois who are attracted to the side of the big bourgeoisie and are largely subordinated to them through this apparatus, which provides the upper sections of the peasants, small artisans, tradesmen, and the like with comparatively comfortable, quiet, and respectable jobs raising the holders above the people. Consider what happened in Russia during the six months following February 27, 1917. The official posts which formerly were given by preference to the Black Hundreds have now become the spoils of the Cadets, Mensheviks, and Social-Revolutionaries. Nobody has really thought of introducing any serious reforms. Every effort has been made to put them off "until the Constituent Assembly meets", and to steadily put off its convocation until after the war! But there has been no delay, no waiting for the Constituent Assembly, in the matter of dividing the spoils of getting the lucrative jobs of ministers, deputy ministers, governors-general, etc., etc.! The game of combinations that has been played in forming the government has been, in essence, only an expression of this division and redivision of the “spoils”, which has been going on above and below, throughout the country, in every department of central and local government. The six months between February 27 and August 27, 1917, can be summed up, objectively summed up beyond all dispute, as follows: reforms shelved, distribution of official jobs accomplished and “mistakes” in the distribution corrected by a few redistributions.

But the more the bureaucratic apparatus is “redistributed” among the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties (among the Cadets, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in the case of Russia), the more keenly aware the oppressed classes, and the proletariat at their head, become of their irreconcilable hostility to the whole of bourgeois society. Hence the need for all bourgeois parties, even for the most democratic and "revolutionary-democratic" among them, to intensify repressive measures against the revolutionary proletariat, to strengthen the apparatus of coercion, i.e., the state machine. This course of events compels the revolution "to concentrate all its forces of destruction" against the state power, and to set itself the aim, not of improving the state machine, but of smashing and destroying it.

It was not logical reasoning, but actual developments, the actual experience of 1848-51, that led to the matter being presented in this way. The extent to which Marx held strictly to the solid ground of historical experience can be seen from the fact that, in 1852, he did not yet specifically raise the question of what was to take the place of the state machine to be destroyed. Experience had not yet provided material for dealing with this question, which history placed on the agenda later on, in 1871. In 1852, all that could be established with the accuracy of scientific observation was that the proletarian revolution had approached the task of "concentrating all its forces of destruction" against the state power, of “smashing” the state machine.

Here the question may arise: is it correct to generalize the experience, observations and conclusions of Marx, to apply them to a field that is wider than the history of France during the three years 1848-51? Before proceeding to deal with this question, let us recall a remark made by Engels and then examine the facts. In his introduction to the third edition of *The Eighteenth Brumaire* , Engels wrote:

"France is the country where, more than anywhere else, the historical class struggles were each time fought out to a finish, and where, consequently, the changing political forms within which they move and in which their results are summarized have been stamped in the sharpest outlines. The center of feudalism in the Middle Ages, the model country, since the Renaissance, of a unified monarchy based on social estates, France

demolished feudalism in the Great Revolution and established the rule of the bourgeoisie in a classical purity unequaled by any other European land. And the struggle of the upward-striving proletariat against the ruling bourgeoisie appeared here in an acute form unknown elsewhere." (p. 4, 1907 edition)

The last remark is out of date insomuch as since 1871 there has been a lull in the revolutionary struggle of the French proletariat, although, long as this lull may be, it does not at all preclude the possibility that in the coming proletarian revolution France may show herself to be the classic country of the class struggle to a finish.

Let us, however, cast a general glance over the history of the advanced countries at the turn of the century. We shall see that the same process went on more slowly, in more varied forms, in a much wider field: on the one hand, the development of "parliamentary power" both in the republican countries (France, America, Switzerland), and in the monarchies (Britain, Germany to a certain extent, Italy, the Scandinavia countries, etc.); on the other hand, a struggle for power among the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties which distributed and redistributed the “spoils” of office, with the foundations of bourgeois society unchanged; and, lastly, the perfection and consolidation of the "executive power", of its bureaucratic and military apparatus.

There is not the slightest doubt that these features are common to the whole of the modern evolution of all capitalist states in general. In the last three years 1848-51 France displayed, in a swift, sharp, concentrated form, the very same processes of development which are peculiar to the whole capitalist world.

Imperialism—the era of bank capital, the era of gigantic capitalist monopolies, of the development of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism—has clearly shown an unprecedented growth in its bureaucratic and military apparatus in connection with the intensification of repressive measures against the proletariat both in the monarchical and in the freest, republican countries.

World history is now undoubtedly leading, on an incomparably larger scale than in 1852, to the "concentration of all the forces" of the proletarian

revolution on the “destruction” of the state machine.

What the proletariat will put in its place is suggested by the highly instructive material furnished by the Paris Commune.

3. The Presentation of the Question by Marx in 1852

In 1907, Mehring, in the magazine *Neue Zeit* [12] (Vol.XXV, 2, p. 164), published extracts from Marx's letter to Weydemeyer dated March 5, 1852. This letter, among other things, contains the following remarkable observation:

"And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists, the economic anatomy of classes. What I did that was new was to prove: (1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with the particular, historical phases in the development of production (historische Entwicklungsphasen der Produktion), (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat, (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society." [13]

In these words, Marx succeeded in expressing with striking clarity, first, the chief and radical difference between his theory and that of the foremost and most profound thinkers of the bourgeoisie; and, secondly, the essence of his theory of the state.

It is often said and written that the main point in Marx's theory is the class struggle. But this is wrong. And this wrong notion very often results in an opportunist distortion of Marxism and its falsification in a spirit acceptable to the bourgeoisie. For the theory of the class struggle was created not by Marx, but by the bourgeoisie before Marx, and, generally speaking, it is acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Those who recognize only the class struggle are not yet Marxists; they may be found to be still within the bounds of bourgeois thinking and bourgeois politics. To confine Marxism to the theory of the class struggle means curtailing Marxism, distorting it, reducing it to something acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. That is what constitutes the most profound distinction

between the Marxist and the ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeois. This is the touchstone on which the real understanding and recognition of Marxism should be tested. And it is not surprising that when the history of Europe brought the working class face to face with this question as a practical issue, not only all the opportunists and reformists, but all the Kautskyites (people who vacillate between reformism and Marxism) proved to be miserable philistines and petty-bourgeois democrats repudiating the dictatorship of the proletariat. Kautsky's pamphlet, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat* , published in August 1918, i.e., long after the first edition of the present book, is a perfect example of petty-bourgeois distortion of Marxism and base renunciation of it in deeds, while hypocritically recognizing it in words (see my pamphlet, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* , Petrograd and Moscow, 1918).

Opportunism today, as represented by its principal spokesman, the ex-Marxist Karl Kautsky, fits in completely with Marx's characterization of the bourgeois position quoted above, for this opportunism limits recognition of the class struggle to the sphere of bourgeois relations. (Within this sphere, within its framework, not a single educated liberal will refuse to recognize the class struggle "in principle"!) Opportunism does not extend recognition of the class struggle to the cardinal point, to the period of transition from capitalism to communism, of the overthrow and the complete abolition of the bourgeoisie. In reality, this period inevitably is a period of an unprecedentedly violent class struggle in unprecedentedly acute forms, and, consequently, during this period the state must inevitably be a state that is democratic in a new way (for the proletariat and the propertyless in general) and dictatorial in a new way (against the bourgeoisie).

Further. The essence of Marx's theory of the state has been mastered only by those who realize that the dictatorship of a single class is necessary not only for every class society in general, not only for the proletariat which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, but also for the entire historical period which separates capitalism from "classless society", from communism. Bourgeois states are most varied in form, but their essence is the same: all these states, whatever their form, in the final analysis are inevitably the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The transition from capitalism to communism is certainly bound to yield a tremendous abundance and variety of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be the same: the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Chapter 3: Experience of the Paris Commune of 1871. Marx's Analysis

1. What Made the Communards' Attempt Heroic?

It is well known that in the autumn of 1870, a few months before the Commune, Marx warned the Paris workers that any attempt to overthrow the government would be the folly of despair. But when, in March 1871, a decisive battle was forced upon the workers and they accepted it, when the uprising had become a fact, Marx greeted the proletarian revolution with the greatest enthusiasm, in spite of unfavorable auguries. Marx did not persist in the pedantic attitude of condemning an "untimely" movement as did the ill-famed Russian renegade from marxism, Plekhanov, who in November 1905 wrote encouragingly about the workers' and peasants' struggle, but after December 1905 cried, liberal fashion: "They should not have taken up arms."

Marx, however, was not only enthusiastic about the heroism of the Communards, who, as he expressed it, "stormed heaven". Although the mass revolutionary movement did not achieve its aim, he regarded it as a historic experience of enormous importance, as a certain advance of the world proletarian revolution, as a practical step that was more important than hundreds of programmes and arguments. Marx endeavored to analyze this experiment, to draw tactical lessons from it and re-examine his theory in the light of it.

The only "correction" Marx thought it necessary to make to the *Communist Manifesto* he made on the basis of the revolutionary experience of the Paris Commune.

The last preface to the new German edition of the *Communist Manifesto* , signed by both its authors, is dated June 24, 1872. In this preface the authors, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, say that the programme of the *Communist Manifesto* "has in some details become out-of-date", and the go on to say:

"... One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that 'the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes'...." [14]

The authors took the words that are in single quotation marks in this passage from Marx's book, *The Civil War in France* .

Thus, Marx and Engels regarded one principal and fundamental lesson of the Paris Commune as being of such enormous importance that they introduced it as an important correction into the *Communist Manifesto* .

Most characteristically, it is this important correction that has been distorted by the opportunists, and its meaning probably is not known to nine-tenths, if not ninety-nine-hundredths, of the readers of the *Communist Manifesto* . We shall deal with this distortion more fully farther on, in a chapter devoted specially to distortions. Here it will be sufficient to note that the current, vulgar “interpretation” of Marx's famous statement just quoted is that Marx here allegedly emphasizes the idea of slow development in contradistinction to the seizure of power, and so on.

As a matter of fact, the exact opposite is the case. Marx's idea is that the working class must break up, smash the "ready-made state machinery", and not confine itself merely to laying hold of it.

On April 12, 1871, i.e., just at the time of the Commune, Marx wrote to Kugelmann:

"If you look up the last chapter of my Eighteenth Brumaire, you will find that I declare that the next attempt of the French Revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to *smash* it [Marx's italics—the original is zerbrechen], and this is the precondition for every real people's revolution on the Continent. And this is what our heroic Party comrades in Paris are attempting." (Neue Zeit, Vol.XX, 1, 1901-02, p. 709.) [15]
(The letters of Marx to Kugelmann have appeared in Russian in no less than two editions, one of which I edited and supplied with a preface.)

The words, "to smash the bureaucratic-military machine", briefly express the principal lesson of Marxism regarding the tasks of the proletariat during

a revolution in relation to the state. And this is the lesson that has been not only completely ignored, but positively distorted by the prevailing, Kautskyite, “interpretation” of Marxism!

As for Marx's reference to *The Eighteenth Brumaire* , we have quoted the relevant passage in full above.

It is interesting to note, in particular, two points in the above-quoted argument of Marx. First, he restricts his conclusion to the Continent. This was understandable in 1871, when Britain was still the model of a purely capitalist country, but without a militarist clique and, to a considerable degree, without a bureaucracy. Marx therefore excluded Britain, where a revolution, even a people's revolution, then seemed possible, and indeed was possible, without the precondition of destroying "ready-made state machinery".

Today, in 1917, at the time of the first great imperialist war, this restriction made by Marx is no longer valid. Both Britain and America, the biggest and the last representatives—in the whole world—of Anglo-Saxon “liberty”, in the sense that they had no militarist cliques and bureaucracy, have completely sunk into the all-European filthy, bloody morass of bureaucratic-military institutions which subordinate everything to themselves, and suppress everything. Today, in Britain and America, too, "the precondition for every real people's revolution" is the *smashing* , the *destruction* of the "ready-made state machinery" (made and brought up to the “European”, general imperialist, perfection in those countries in the years 1914-17).

Secondly, particular attention should be paid to Marx's extremely profound remark that the destruction of the bureaucratic-military state machine is "the precondition for every real *people's* revolution". This idea of a "people's revolution seems strange coming from Marx, so that the Russian Plekhanovites and Mensheviks, those followers of Struve who wish to be regarded as Marxists, might possibly declare such an expression to be a "slip of the pen" on Marx's part. They have reduced Marxism to such a state of wretchedly liberal distortion that nothing exists for them beyond the antithesis between bourgeois revolution and proletarian revolution, and even this antithesis they interpret in an utterly lifeless way.

If we take the revolutions of the 20th century as examples we shall, of course, have to admit that the Portuguese and the Turkish revolutions are both bourgeois revolutions. Neither of them, however, is a "people's" revolution, since, in neither, do the mass of the people, their vast majority, come out actively, independently, with their own economic and political demands to any noticeable degree. By contrast, although the Russian bourgeois revolution of 1905-07 displayed no such “brilliant” successes as at time fell to the Portuguese and Turkish revolutions, it was undoubtedly a "real people's" revolution, since the mass of the people, their majority, the very lowest social groups, crushed by oppression and exploitation, rose independently and stamped on the entire course of the revolution the imprint of *their* own demands, *their* attempt to build in their own way a new society in place of the old society that was being destroyed.

In Europe, in 1871, the proletariat did not constitute the majority of the people in any country on the Continent. A "people's" revolution, one actually sweeping the majority into its stream, could be such only if it embraced both the proletariat and the peasants. These two classes then constituted the “people”. These two classes are united by the fact that the "bureaucratic-military state machine" oppresses, crushes, and exploits them. To smash this machine, to break it up, is truly in the interest of the “people”, of their majority, of the workers and most of the peasants, is "the precondition" for a free alliance of the poor peasant and the proletarians, whereas without such an alliance democracy is unstable and socialist transformation is impossible.

As is well known, the Paris Commune was actually working its way toward such an alliance, although it did not reach its goal owing to a number of circumstances, internal and external.

Consequently, in speaking of a "real people's revolution", Marx, without in the least discounting the special features of the petty bourgeois (he spoke a great deal about them and often), took strict account of the actual balance of class forces in most of the continental countries of Europe in 1871. On the other hand, he stated that the “smashing” of the state machine was required by the interests of both the workers and the peasants, that it united them, that it placed before them the common task of removing the “parasite” and of replacing it by something new.

By what exactly?

2. What is to Replace the Smashed State Machine?

In 1847, in the *Communist Manifesto* , Marx's answer to this question was as yet a purely abstract one; to be exact, it was an answer that indicated the tasks, but not the ways of accomplishing them. The answer given in the *Communist Manifesto* was that this machine was to be replaced by "the proletariat organized as the ruling class", by the "winning of the battle of democracy".

Marx did not indulge in utopias; he expected the *experience* of the mass movement to provide the reply to the question as to the specific forms this organization of the proletariat as the ruling class would assume and as to the exact manner in which this organization would be combined with the most complete, most consistent "winning of the battle of democracy."

Marx subjected the experience of the Commune, meager as it was, to the most careful analysis in *The Civil War in France* . Let us quote the most important passages of this work. [All the following quotes in this Chapter, with one exception, are so cited - Ed.]

Originating from the Middle Ages, there developed in the 19th century "the centralized state power, with its ubiquitous organs of standing army, police, bureaucracy, clergy, and judicature." With the development of class antagonisms between capital and labor, "state power assumed more and more the character of a public force organized for the suppression of the working class, of a machine of class rule. After every revolution, which marks an advance in the class struggle, the purely coercive character of the state power stands out in bolder and bolder relief." After the revolution of 1848-49, state power became "the national war instruments of capital against labor". The Second Empire consolidated this.

"The direct antithesis to the empire was the Commune." It was the "specific form" of "a republic that was not only to remove the monarchical form of class rule, but class rule itself."

What was this “specific” form of the proletarian, socialist republic? What was the state it began to create?

"The first decree of the Commune, therefore, was the suppression of the standing army, and the substitution for it of the armed people."

This demand now figures in the programme of every party calling itself socialist. The real worth of their programme, however, is best shown by the behavior of our Social-Revolutionists and mensheviks, who, right after the revolution of February 27, refused to carry out this demand!

"The Commune was formed of the municipal councilors, chosen by universal suffrage in the various wards of the town, responsible and revocable at any time. The majority of its members were naturally working men, or acknowledged representatives of the working class.... The police, which until then had been the instrument of the Government, was at once stripped of its political attributes, and turned into the responsible, and at all times revocable, agent of the Commune. So were the officials of all other branches of the administration. From the members of the Commune downwards, the public service had to be done at *workmen's wages* . The privileges and the representation allowances of the high dignitaries of state disappeared along with the high dignitaries themselves.... Having once got rid of the standing army and the police, the instruments of physical force of the old government, the Commune proceeded at once to break the instrument of spiritual suppression, the power of the priests.... The judicial functionaries lost that sham independence... they were thenceforward to be elective, responsible, and revocable." [16]

The Commune, therefore, appears to have replaced the smashed state machine “only” by fuller democracy: abolition of the standing army; all officials to be elected and subject to recall. But as a matter of fact this “only” signifies a gigantic replacement of certain institutions by other institutions of a fundamentally different type. This is exactly a case of "quantity being transformed into quality": democracy, introduced as fully and consistently as is at all conceivable, is transformed from bourgeois into proletarian democracy; from the state (a special force for the suppression of a particular class) into something which is no longer the state proper.

It is still necessary to suppress the bourgeoisie and crush their resistance. This was particularly necessary for the Commune; and one of the reasons for its defeat was that it did not do this with sufficient determination. The

organ of suppression, however, is here the majority of the population, and not a minority, as was always the case under slavery, serfdom, and wage slavery. And since the majority of people itself suppresses its oppressors, a 'special force" for suppression is no longer necessary! In this sense, the state begins to wither away. Instead of the special institutions of a privileged minority (privileged officialdom, the chiefs of the standing army), the majority itself can directly fulfill all these functions, and the more the functions of state power are performed by the people as a whole, the less need there is for the existence of this power.

In this connection, the following measures of the Commune, emphasized by Marx, are particularly noteworthy: the abolition of all representation allowances, and of all monetary privileges to officials, the reduction of the remuneration of all servants of the state to the level of " workmen's wages". This shows more clearly than anything else the turn from bourgeois to proletarian democracy, from the democracy of the oppressors to that of the oppressed classes, from the state as a "special force" for the suppression of a particular class to the suppression of the oppressors by the general force of the majority of the people—the workers and the peasants. And it is on this particularly striking point, perhaps the most important as far as the problem of the state is concerned, that the ideas of Marx have been most completely ignored! In popular commentaries, the number of which is legion, this is not mentioned. The thing done is to keep silent about it as if it were a piece of old-fashioned “naivete”, just as Christians, after their religion had been given the status of state religion, “forgot” the “naivete” of primitive Christianity with its democratic revolutionary spirit.

The reduction of the remuneration of high state officials seem “simply” a demand of naive, primitive democracy. One of the “founders” of modern opportunism, the ex-Social-Democrat Eduard Bernstein, has more than once repeated the vulgar bourgeois jeers at “primitive” democracy. Like all opportunists, and like the present Kautskyites, he did not understand at all that, first of all, the transition from capitalism to socialism is impossible without a certain “reversion” to “primitive” democracy (for how else can the majority, and then the whole population without exception, proceed to discharge state functions?); and that, secondly, "primitive democracy" based on capitalism and capitalist culture is not the same as primitive democracy in prehistoric or pre-capitalist times. Capitalist culture has created large-

scale production, factories, railways, the postal service, telephones, etc., and on this basis the great majority of the functions of the old "state power" have become so simplified and can be reduced to such exceedingly simple operations of registration, filing, and checking that they can be easily performed by every literate person, can quite easily be performed for ordinary " workmen's wages", and that these functions can (and must) be stripped of every shadow of privilege, of every semblance of "official grandeur".

All officials, without exception, elected and subject to recall at any time, their salaries reduced to the level of ordinary " workmen's wages"—these simple and "self-evident" democratic measures, while completely uniting the interests of the workers and the majority of the peasants, at the same time serve as a bridge leading from capitalism to socialism. These measures concern the reorganization of the state, the purely political reorganization of society; but, of course, they acquire their full meaning and significance only in connection with the "expropriation of the expropriators" either bring accomplished or in preparation, i.e., with the transformation of capitalist private ownership of the means of production into social ownership.

"The Commune," Marx wrote, "made the catchword of all bourgeois revolutions, cheap government, a reality, by abolishing the two greatest sources of expenditure—the army and the officialdom."

From the peasants, as from other sections of the petty bourgeoisie, only an insignificant few "rise to the top", "get on in the world" in the bourgeois sense, i.e., become either well-to-do, bourgeois, or officials in secure and privileged positions. In every capitalist country where there are peasants (as there are in most capitalist countries), the vast majority of them are oppressed by the government and long for its overthrow, long for “cheap” government. This can be achieved only by the proletariat; and by achieving it, the proletariat at the same time takes a step towards the socialist reorganization of the state.

3. Abolition of Parliamentarism

"The Commune," Marx wrote, "was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time....

"Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to represent and repress [ver- and zertreten] the people in parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people constituted in communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for workers, foremen and accountants for his business."

Owing to the prevalence of social-chauvinism and opportunism, this remarkable criticism of parliamentarism, made in 1871, also belongs now to the "forgotten words " of Marxism. The professional Cabinet Ministers and parliamentarians, the traitors to the proletariat and the “practical” socialists of our day, have left all criticism of parliamentarism to the anarchists, and, on this wonderfully reasonable ground, they denounce all criticism of parliamentarism as “anarchism”!! It is not surprising that the proletariat of the “advanced" parliamentary countries, disgusted with such “socialists" as the Scheidemanns , Davids, Legiens, Sembats, Renaudels, Hendersons, Vanderveldes, Staunings, Brantings, Bissolatis, and Co., has been with increasing frequency giving its sympathies to anarcho-syndicalism, in spite of the fact that the latter is merely the twin brother of opportunism.

For Marx, however, revolutionary dialectics was never the empty fashionable phrase, the toy rattle, which Plekhanov, Kautsky and others have made of it. Marx knew how to break with anarchism ruthlessly for its inability to make use even of the “pigsty” of bourgeois parliamentarism, especially when the situation was obviously not revolutionary; but at the same time he knew how to subject parliamentarism to genuinely revolutionary proletarian criticism.

To decide once every few years which members of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary-constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics.

But if we deal with the question of the state, and if we consider parliamentarism as one of the institutions of the state, from the point of view of the tasks of the proletariat in this field, what is the way out of parliamentarism? How can it be dispensed with?

Once again, we must say: the lessons of Marx, based on the study of the Commune, have been so completely forgotten that the present-day "Social-

Democrat" (i.e., present-day traitor to socialism) really cannot understand any criticism of parliamentarism other than anarchist or reactionary criticism.

The way out of parliamentarism is not, of course, the abolition of representative institutions and the elective principle, but the conversion of the representative institutions from talking shops into “working” bodies. "The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time."

"A working, not a parliamentary body"—this is a blow straight from the shoulder at the present-day parliamentarian country, from America to Switzerland, from France to Britain, Norway and so forth—in these countries the real business of “state” is performed behind the scenes and is carried on by the departments, chancelleries, and General Staffs. Parliament is given up to talk for the special purpose of fooling the "common people". This is so true that even in the Russian republic, a bourgeois-democratic republic, all these sins of parliamentarism came out at once, even before it managed to set up a real parliament. The heroes of rotten philistinism, such as the skobelevs and tseretelis , the Chernovs and Avksentyevs, have even succeeded in polluting the Soviets after the fashion of the most disgusting bourgeois parliamentarism, in converting them into mere talking shops. In the Soviets, the “socialist” Ministers are fooling the credulous rustics with phrase-mongering and resolutions. In the government itself a sort of permanent shuffle is going on in order that, on the one hand, as many Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks as possible may in turn get near the “pie”, the lucrative and honorable posts, and that, on the other hand, the “attention” of the people may be “engaged”. Meanwhile the chancelleries and army staffs “do” the business of “state”.

Dyelo Naroda , the organ of the ruling Socialist-Revolutionary Party, recently admitted in a leading article—with the matchless frankness of people of "good society", in which “all” are engaged in political prostitution —that even in the ministeries headed by the “socialists” (save the mark!), the whole bureaucratic apparatus is in fact unchanged, is working in the old way and quite “freely” sabotaging revolutionary measures! Even without this admission, does not the actual history of the participation of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in the government prove this? It

is noteworthy, however, that in the ministerial company of the Cadets, the Chernovs, Rusanovs, Zenzinovs, and other editors of *Dyelo Naroda* have so completely lost all sense of shame as to brazenly assert, as if it were a mere bagatelle, that in “their” ministeries everything is unchanged!! Revolutionary-democratic phrases to gull the rural Simple Simons, and bureaucracy and red tape to "gladden the hearts" of the capitalists—that is the essence of the “honest” coalition.

The Commune substitutes for the venal and rotten parliamentarism of bourgeois society institutions in which freedom of opinion and discussion does not degenerate into deception, for the parliamentarians themselves have to work, have to execute their own laws, have themselves to test the results achieved in reality, and to account directly to their constituents. Representative institutions remain, but there is no parliamentarism here as a special system, as the division of labor between the legislative and the executive, as a privileged position for the deputies. We cannot imagine democracy, even proletarian democracy, without representative institutions, but we can and must imagine democracy without parliamentarism, if criticism of bourgeois society is not mere words for us, if the desire to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie is our earnest and sincere desire, and not a mere “election” cry for catching workers' votes, as it is with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, and also the Scheidemanns and Legiens , the Smblats and Vanderveldes.

It is extremely instructive to note that, in speaking of the function of those officials who are necessary for the Commune and for proletarian democracy, Marx compares them to the workers of "every other employer", that is, of the ordinary capitalist enterprise, with its "workers, foremen, and accountants".

There is no trace of utopianism in Marx, in the sense that he made up or invented a “new” society. No, he studied the birth of the new society out of the old, and the forms of transition from the latter to the former, as a mass proletarian movement and tried to draw practical lessons from it. He “Learned” from the Commune, just as all the great revolutionary thinkers learned unhesitatingly from the experience of great movements of the oppressed classes, and never addressed them with pedantic “homilies” (such

as Plekhanov's : "They should not have taken up arms" or Tsereteli's : "A class must limit itself").

Abolishing the bureaucracy at once, everywhere and completely, is out of the question. It is a utopia. But to smash the old bureaucratic machine at once and to begin immediately to construct a new one that will make possible the gradual abolition of all bureaucracy—this is not a utopia, it is the experience of the Commune, the direct and immediate task of the revolutionary proletariat.

Capitalism simplifies the functions of “state” administration; it makes it possible to cast “bossing” aside and to confine the whole matter to the organization of the proletarians (as the ruling class), which will hire "workers, foremen and accountants" in the name of the whole of society.

We are not utopians, we do not “dream” of dispensing at once with all administration, with all subordination. These anarchist dreams, based upon incomprehension of the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship, are totally alien to Marxism, and, as a matter of fact, serve only to postpone the socialist revolution until people are different. No, we want the socialist revolution with people as they are now, with people who cannot dispense with subordination, control, and "foremen and accountants".

The subordination, however, must be to the armed vanguard of all the exploited and working people, i.e., to the proletariat. A beginning can and must be made at once, overnight, to replace the specific “bossing” of state officials by the simple functions of "foremen and accountants", functions which are already fully within the ability of the average town dweller and can well be performed for " workmen's wages".

We, the workers, shall organize large-scale production on the basis of what capitalism has already created, relying on our own experience as workers, establishing strict, iron discipline backed up by the state power of the armed workers. We shall reduce the role of state officials to that of simply carrying out our instructions as responsible, revocable, modestly paid "foremen and accountants" (of course, with the aid of technicians of all sorts, types and degrees). This is our proletarian task, this is what we can and must start with in accomplishing the proletarian revolution. Such a beginning, on the basis of large-scale production, will of itself lead to the gradual "withering

away" of all bureaucracy, to the gradual creation of an order—an order without inverted commas, an order bearing no similarity to wage slavery—an order under which the functions of control and accounting, becoming more and more simple, will be performed by each in turn, will then become a habit and will finally die out as the special functions of a special section of the population.

A witty German Social-Democrat of the seventies of the last century called the postal service an example of the socialist economic system. This is very true. At the present the postal service is a business organized on the lines of state-capitalist monopoly. Imperialism is gradually transforming all trusts into organizations of a similar type, in which, standing over the “common” people, who are overworked and starved, one has the same bourgeois bureaucracy. But the mechanism of social management is here already at hand. Once we have overthrown the capitalists, crushed the resistance of these exploiters with the iron hand of the armed workers, and smashed the bureaucratic machinery of the modern state, we shall have a splendidly-equipped mechanism, freed from the “parasite”, a mechanism which can very well be set going by the united workers themselves, who will hire technicians, foremen and accountants, and pay them all, as indeed all “state” officials in general, workmen's wages. Here is a concrete, practical task which can immediately be fulfilled in relation to all trusts, a task whose fulfillment will rid the working people of exploitation, a task which takes account of what the Commune had already begun to practice (particularly in building up the state).

To organize the whole economy on the lines of the postal service so that the technicians, foremen and accountants, as well as all officials, shall receive salaries no higher than "a workman's wage", all under the control and leadership of the armed proletariat—that is our immediate aim. This is what will bring about the abolition of parliamentarism and the preservation of representative institutions. This is what will rid the laboring classes of the bourgeoisie's prostitution of these institutions.

4. Organization of National Unity

"In a brief sketch of national organization which the Commune had no time to develop, it states explicitly that the Commune was to be the political

form of even the smallest village...." The communes were to elect the "National Delegation" in Paris.

"... The few but important functions which would still remain for a central government were not to to be suppressed, as had been deliberately misstated, but were to be transferred to communal, i.e., strictly responsible, officials.

"... National unity was not to be broken, but, on the contrary, organized by the communal constitution; it was to become a reality by the destruction of state power which posed as the embodiment of that unity yet wanted to be independent of, and superior to, the nation, on whose body it was but a parasitic excrescence. While the merely repressive organs of the old governmental power were to be amputated, its legitimate functions were to be wrested from an authority claiming the right to stand above society, and restored to the responsible servants of society."

The extent to which the opportunists of present-day Social-Democracy have failed—perhaps it would be more true to say, have refused—to understand these observations of Marx is best shown by that book of Herostratean fame of the renegade Bernstein, *The Premises of Socialism and the Tasks of the Social-Democrats* . It is in connection with the above passage from Marx that Bernstein wrote that "as far as its political content", this programme "displays, in all its essential features, the greatest similarity to the federalism of Proudhon.... In spite of all the other points of difference between Marx and the 'petty-bourgeois' Proudhon [Bernstein places the word "petty-bourgeois" in inverted commas, to make it sound ironical] on these points, their lines of reasoning run as close as could be." Of course, Bernstein continues, the importance of the municipalities is growing, but "it seems doubtful to me whether the first job of democracy would be such a dissolution [Auflosung] of the modern states and such a complete transformation [Umwandlung] of their organization as is visualized by Marx and Proudhon (the formation of a National Assembly from delegates of the provincial of district assemblies, which, in their turn, would consist of delegates from the communes), so that consequently the previous mode of national representation would disappear." (Bernstein, *Premises* , German edition, 1899, p. 134 and 136)

To confuse Marx's view on the "destruction of state power, a parasitic excrescence", with Proudhon's federalism is positively monstrous! But it is no accident, for it never occurs to the opportunist that Marx does not speak here at all about federalism as opposed to centralism, but about smashing the old, bourgeois state machine which exists in all bourgeois countries.

The only thing that does occur to the opportunist is what he sees around him, in an environment of petty-bourgeois philistinism and “reformists” stagnation, namely, only “municipalities”! The opportunist has even grown out of the habit of thinking about proletarian revolution.

It is ridiculous. But the remarkable thing is that nobody argued with Bernstein on this point. Bernstein has been refuted by many, especially by Plekhanov in Russian literature and by Kautsky in European literature, but neither of them has said anything about this distortion of Marx by Bernstein.

The opportunist has so much forgotten how to think in a revolutionary way and to dwell on revolution that he attributes “federalism” to Marx, whom he confuses with the founder of anarchism, Proudhon. As for Kautsky and Plekhanov, who claim to be orthodox Marxists and defenders of the theory of revolutionary Marxism, they are silent on this point! Here is one of the roots of the extreme vulgarization of the views on the difference between Marxism and anarchism, which is characteristic of both the Kautskyites and the opportunists, and which we shall discuss again later.

There is not a trace of federalism in Marx's above-quoted observation on the experience of the Commune. Marx agreed with Proudhon on the very point that the opportunist Bernstein did not see. Marx disagreed with Proudhon on the very point on which Bernstein found a similarity between them.

Marx agreed with Proudhon in that they both stood for the “smashing” of the modern state machine. Neither the opportunists nor the Kautskyites wish to see the similarity of views on this point between Marxism and anarchism (both Proudhon and Bakunin) because this is where they have departed from Marxism.

Marx disagreed both with Proudhon and Bakunin precisely on the question of federalism (not to mention the dictatorship of the proletariat). Federalism as a principle follows logically from the petty-bourgeois views of anarchism. Marx was a centralist. There is no departure whatsoever from centralism in his observations just quoted. Only those who are imbued with the philistine "superstitious belief" in the state can mistake the destruction of the bourgeois state machine for the destruction of centralism!

Now if the proletariat and the poor peasants take state power into their own hands, organize themselves quite freely in communes, and unite the action of all the communes in striking at capital, in crushing the resistance of the capitalists, and in transferring the privately-owned railways, factories, land and so on to the entire nation, to the whole of society, won't that be centralism? Won't that be the most consistent democratic centralism and, moreover, proletarian centralism?

Bernstein simply cannot conceive of the possibility of voluntary centralism, of the voluntary fusion of the proletarian communes, for the sole purpose of destroying bourgeois rule and the bourgeois state machine. Like all philistines, Bernstein pictures centralism as something which can be imposed and maintained solely from above, and solely by the bureaucracy and military clique.

As though foreseeing that his views might be distorted, Marx expressly emphasized that the charge that the Commune had wanted to destroy national unity, to abolish the central authority, was a deliberate fraud. Marx purposely used the words: "National unity was... to be organized", so as to oppose conscious, democratic, proletarian centralism to bourgeois, military, bureaucratic centralism.

But there are none so deaf as those who will not hear. And the very thing the opportunists of present-day Social-Democracy do not want to hear about is the destruction of state power, the amputation of the parasitic excrescence.

5. Abolition of the Parasite State

We have already quoted Marx's words on the subject, and we must now supplement them.

"It is generally the fate of new historical creations," he wrote, "to be mistaken for the counterpart of older and even defunct forms of social life, to which they may bear a certain likeness. Thus, this new Commune, which breaks [bricht, smashes] the modern state power, has been regarded as a revival of the medieval communes... as a federation of small states (as Montesquieu and the Girondins [17] visualized it)... as an exaggerated form of the old struggle against overcentralization....

"... The Communal Constitution would have restored to the social body all the forces hitherto absorbed by that parasitic excrescence, the 'state', feeding upon and hampering the free movement of society. By this one act it would have initiated the regeneration of France....

"... The Communal Constitution would have brought the rural producers under the intellectual lead of the central towns of their districts, and there secured to them, in the town working men, the natural trustees of their interests. The very existence of the Commune involved, as a matter of course, local self-government, but no longer as a counterpoise to state power, now become superfluous."

"Breaking state power", which as a "parasitic excrescence"; its “amputation”, its “smashing”; "state power, now become superfluous"—these are the expressions Marx used in regard to the state when appraising and analyzing the experience of the Commune.

All this was written a little less than half a century ago; and now one has to engage in excavations, as it were, in order to bring undistorted Marxism to the knowledge of the mass of the people. The conclusions drawn from the observation of the last great revolution which Marx lived through were forgotten just when the time for the next great proletarian revolution arrived.

"... The multiplicity of interpretations to which the Commune has been subjected, and the multiplicity of interests which expressed themselves in it show that it was a thoroughly flexible political form, while all previous forms of government had been essentially repressive. Its true secret was this: it was essentially a working-class government, the result of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form

at last discovered under which the economic emancipation of labor could be accomplished....

"Except on this last condition, the Communal Constitution would have been an impossibility and a delusion...."

The utopians busied themselves with “discovering” political forms under which the socialist transformation of society was to take place. The anarchists dismissed the question of political forms altogether. The opportunists of present-day Social-Democracy accepted the bourgeois political forms of the parliamentary democratic state as the limit which should not be overstepped; they battered their foreheads praying before this “model”, and denounced as anarchism every desire to break these forms.

Marx deduced from the whole history of socialism and the political struggle that the state was bound to disappear, and that the transitional form of its disappearance (the transition from state to non-state) would be the "proletariat organized as the ruling class". Marx, however, did not set out to discover the political forms of this future stage. He limited himself to carefully observing French history, to analyzing it, and to drawing the conclusion to which the year 1851 had led, namely, that matters were moving towards destruction of the bourgeois state machine.

And when the mass revolutionary movement of the proletariat burst forth, Marx, in spite of its failure, in spite of its short life and patent weakness, began to study the forms it had discovered.

The Commune is the form "at last discovered" by the proletarian revolution, under which the economic emancipation of labor can take place.

The Commune is the first attempt by a proletarian revolution to smash the bourgeois state machine; and it is the political form "at last discovered", by which the smashed state machine can and must be replaced.

We shall see further on that the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, in different circumstances and under different conditions, continue the work of the Commune and confirm Marx's brilliant historical analysis.

Chapter 4: Supplementary Explanations by Engels

Marx gave the fundamentals concerning the significance of the experience of the Commune. Engels returned to the same subject time and again, and explained Marx's analysis and conclusions, sometimes elucidating other aspects of the question with such power and vividness that it is necessary to deal with his explanations specially.

1. The Housing Question

In his work, *The Housing Question* (1872), Engels already took into account the experience of the Commune, and dealt several times with the tasks of the revolution in relation to the state. It is interesting to note that the treatment of this specific subject clearly revealed, on the one hand, points of similarity between the proletarian state and the present state—points that warrant speaking of the state in both cases—and, on the other hand, points of difference between them, or the transition to the destruction of the state.

"How is the housing question to be settled then? In present-day society, it is settled just as any other social question: by the gradual economic leveling of demand and supply, a settlement which reproduces the question itself again and again and therefore is no settlement. How a social revolution would settle this question not only depends on the circumstances in each particular case, but is also connected with much more far-reaching questions, one of the most fundamental of which is the abolition of the antithesis between town and country. As it is not our task to create utopian systems for the organization of the future society, it would be more than idle to go into the question here. But one thing is certain: there is already a sufficient quantity of houses in the big cities to remedy immediately all real 'housing shortage', provided they are used judiciously. This can naturally only occur through the expropriation of the present owners and by quartering in their houses homeless workers or workers overcrowded in their present homes. As soon as the proletariat has won political power, such a measure prompted by concern for the common good will be just as easy to carry out as are other expropriations and billetings by the present-day state."(German edition, 1887, p. 22) [18]

The change in the form of state power is not examined here, but only the content of its activity. Expropriations and billetings take place by order even of the present state. From the formal point of view, the proletarian state will also “order” the occupation of dwellings and expropriation of houses. But it is clear that the old executive apparatus, the bureaucracy, which is connected with the bourgeoisie, would simply be unfit to carry out the orders of the proletarian state.

"...It must be pointed out that the 'actual seizure' of all the instruments of labor, the taking possession of industry as a whole by the working people, is the exact opposite of the Proudhonist 'redemption'. In the latter case the individual worker becomes the owner of the dwelling, the peasant farm, the instruments of labor; in the former case, the 'working people' remain the collective owners of the houses, factories and instruments of labor, and will hardly permit their use, at least during a transitional period, by individuals or associations without compensation for the cost. In the same way, the abolition of property in land is not the abolition of ground rent but its transfer, if in a modified form, to society. The actual seizure of all the instruments of labor by the working people, therefore, does not at all preclude the retention of rent relations." (p. 68)

We shall examine the question touched upon in this passage, namely, the economic basis for the withering away of the state, in the next chapter. Engels expresses himself most cautiously. saying that the proletarian state would “hardly” permit the use of houses without payment, "at least during a transitional period". The letting of houses owed by the whole people to individual families presupposes the collection of rent, a certain amount of control, and the employment of some standard in allotting the housing. All this calls for a certain form of state, but it does not at all call for a special military bureaucratic apparatus, with officials occupying especially privileged positions. The transition to a situation in which it will be possible to supply dwellings rent-free depends on the complete "withering away" of the state.

Speaking of the Blanquists' adoption of the fundamental position of Marxism after the Commune and under the influence of its experience, Engels, in passing, formulates this position as follows:

"...Necessity of political action by the proletariat and of its dictatorship as the transition to the abolition of classes and, with them, of the state...." (p. 55)

Addicts of hair-splitting criticism, or bourgeois "exterminators of Marxism", will perhaps see a contradiction between this recognition of the "abolition of the state" and repudiation of this formula as an anarchist one in the above passage from Anti-Dühring. It would not be surprising if the opportunists classed Engels, too, as an “anarchist”, for it is becoming increasingly common with the social-chauvinists to accuse the internationalists of anarchism.

Marxism has always taught that with the abolition of classes the state will also be abolished. The well-known passage on the "withering away of the state" in Anti-Dühring accuses the anarchists not simply of favoring the abolition of the state, but of preaching that the state can be abolished “overnight”.

As the now prevailing "Social-Democratic" doctrine completely distorts the relation of Marxism to anarchism on the question of the abolition of the state, it will be particularly useful to recall a certain controversy in which Marx and Engels came out against the anarchists.

Controversy with the Anarchists

This controversy took place in 1873. Marx and Engels contributed articles against the Proudhonists, “autonomists” or "anti-authoritarians", to an Italian socialist annual, and it was not until 1913 that these articles appeared in German in *Neue Zeit* . [19]

"If the political struggle of the working class assumes revolutionary form," wrote Marx, ridiculing the anarchists for their repudiation of politics, "and if the workers set up their revolutionary dictatorship in place of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, they commit the terrible crime of violating principles, for in order to satisfy their wretched, vulgar everyday needs and to crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie, they give the state a revolutionary and transient form, instead of laying down their arms and abolishing the state." (Neue Zeit Vol.XXXII, 1, 1913-14, p. 40)

It was solely against this kind of “abolition” of the state that Marx fought in refuting the anarchists! He did not at all oppose the view that the state would disappear when classes disappeared, or that it would be abolished when classes were abolished. What he did oppose was the proposition that the workers should renounce the use of arms, organized violence, that is, the state, which is to serve to "crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie".

To prevent the true meaning of his struggle against anarchism from being distorted, Marx expressly emphasized the "revolutionary and transient form" of the state which the proletariat needs. The proletariat needs the state only temporarily. We do not after all differ with the anarchists on the question of the abolition of the state as the aim. We maintain that, to achieve this aim, we must temporarily make use of the instruments, resources, and methods of state power against the exploiters, just as the temporary dictatorship of the oppressed class is necessary for the abolition of classes. Marx chooses the sharpest and clearest way of stating his case against the anarchists: After overthrowing the yoke of the capitalists, should the workers "lay down their arms", or use them against the capitalists in order to crush their resistance? But what is the systematic use of arms by one class against another if not a "transient form" of state?

Let every Social-Democrat ask himself: Is that how he has been posing the question of the state in controversy with the anarchists? Is that how it has been posed by the vast majority of the official socialist parties of the Second International?

Engels expounds the same ideas in much greater detail and still more popularly. First of all he ridicules the muddled ideas of the Proudhonists, who call themselves "anti-authoritarians", i.e., repudiating all authority, all subordination, all power. Take a factory, a railway, a ship on the high seas, said Engels: is it not clear that not one of these complex technical establishments, based on the use of machinery and the systematic co-operation of many people, could function without a certain amount of subordination and, consequently, without a certain amount of authority or power?

"...When I counter the most rabid anti-authoritarians with these arguments, the only answer they can give me is the following: Oh, that's true, except that here it is not a question of authority with which we vest our delegates,

but of a commission! These people imagine they can change a thing by changing its name...."

Having thus shown that authority and autonomy are relative terms, that the sphere of their application varies with the various phases of social development, that it is absurd to take them as absolutes, and adding that the sphere of application of machinery and large-scale production is steadily expanding, Engels passes from the general discussion of authority to the question of the state.

"Had the autonomists," he wrote, "contented themselves with saying that the social organization of the future would allow authority only within the bounds which the conditions of production make inevitable, one could have come to terms with them. But they are blind to all facts that make authority necessary and they passionately fight the word.

"Why do the anti-authoritarians not confine themselves to crying out against political authority, the state? All socialists are agreed that the state, and with it political authority, will disappear as a result of the coming social revolution, that is, that public functions will lose their political character and become mere administrative functions of watching over social interests. But the anti-authoritarians demand that the political state be abolished at one stroke, even before the social relations that gave both to it have been destroyed. They demand that the first act of the social revolution shall be the abolition of authority.

"Have these gentlemen ever seen a revolution? A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is an act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon, all of which are highly authoritarian means. And the victorious party must maintain its rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries. Would the Paris Commune have lasted more than a day if it had not used the authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie? Cannot we, on the contrary, blame it for having made too little use of that authority? Therefore, one of two things: either that anti-authoritarians don't know what they are talking about, in which case they are creating nothing but confusion. Or they do know, and in that case they are betraying the cause of the proletariat. In either case they serve only reaction ." (p. 39)

This argument touches upon questions which should be examined in connection with the relationship between politics and economics during the withering away of the state (the next chapter is devoted to this). These questions are: the transformation of public functions from political into simple functions of administration, and the "political state". This last term, one particularly liable to misunderstanding, indicates the process of the withering away of the state: at a certain stage of this process, the state which is withering away may be called a non-political state.

Again, the most remarkable thing in this argument of Engels' is the way he states his case against the anarchists. Social-Democrats, claiming to be disciples of Engels, have argued on this subject against the anarchists millions of times since 1873, but they have not argued as Marxists could and should. The anarchist idea of abolition of the state is muddled and non-revolutionary—that is how Engels put it. It is precisely the revolution in its rise and development, with its specific tasks in relation to violence, authority, power, the state, that the anarchists refuse to see.

The usual criticism of anarchism by present-day Social-Democrats has boiled down to the purest philistine banality: "We recognize the state, whereas the anarchists do not!" Naturally, such banality cannot but repel workers who are at all capable of thinking and revolutionary-minded. What Engels says is different. He stresses that all socialists recognize that the state will disappear as a result of the socialist revolution. He then deals specifically with the question of the revolution—the very question which, as a rule, the Social-Democrats evade out of opportunism, leaving it, so to speak, exclusively for the anarchists "to work out". And when dealing with this question, Engels takes the bull by the horns; he asks: should not the Commune have made more use of the revolutionary power of the state, that is, of the proletariat armed and organized as the ruling class?

Prevailing official Social-Democracy usually dismissed the question of the concrete tasks of the proletariat in the revolution either with a philistine sneer, or, at best, with the sophistic evasion: "The future will show". And the anarchists were justified in saying about such Social-Democrats that they were failing in their task of giving the workers a revolutionary education. Engels draws upon the experience of the last proletarian revolution precisely for the purpose of making a most concrete study of

what should be done by the proletariat, and in what manner, in relation to both the banks and the state.

Letter to Bebel

One of the most, if not the most, remarkable observation on the state in the works of Marx and Engels is contained in the following passage in Engels' letter to Bebel dated March 18-28, 1875. This letter, we may observe in parenthesis, was, as far as we know, first published by Bebel in the second volume of his memoirs (*Aus meinem Leben*), which appeared in 1911, i.e., 36 years after the letter had been written and sent.

Engels wrote to Bebel criticizing the same draft of the Gotha Programme which Marx criticized in his famous letter to Bracke. Referring specifically to the question of the state, Engels said:

"The free people's state has been transferred into the free state. Taken in its grammatical sense, a free state is one where the state is free in relation to its citizens, hence a state with a despotic government. The whole talk about the state should be dropped, especially since the Commune, which was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word. The 'people's state' has been thrown in our faces by the anarchists to the point of disgust, although already Marx's book against Proudhon and later the *Communist Manifesto* say plainly that with the introduction of the socialist order of society the state dissolves of itself [sich auflost] and disappears. As the state is only a transitional institution which is used in the struggle, in the revolution, to hold down one's adversaries by force, it is sheer nonsense to talk of a 'free people's state'; so long as the proletariat still needs the state, it does not need it in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist. We would therefore propose replacing the state everywhere by *Gemeinwesen* , a good old German word which can very well take the place of the French word commune." (p. 321-22 of the German original) [20]

It should be borne in mind that this letter refers to the party programme which Marx criticized in a letter dated only a few weeks later than the above (Marx's letter is dated May 5, 1875), and that at the time Engels was living with Marx in London. Consequently, when he says “we” in the last sentence, Engels undoubtedly, in his own as well as in Marx's name,

suggests to the leader of the German workers' party that the word “state” be struck out of the programme and replaced by the word “community”.

What a howl about “anarchism” would be raised by the leading lights of present-day “Marxism”, which has been falsified for the convenience of the opportunists, if such an amendment of the programme were suggested to them!

Let them howl. This will earn them the praises of the bourgeoisie.

And we shall go on with our work. In revising the programme of our Party, we must by all means take the advice of Engels and Marx into consideration in order to come nearer the truth, to restore Marxism by ridding it of distortions, to guide the struggle of the working class for its emancipation more correctly. Certainly no one opposed to the advice of Engels and Marx will be found among the Bolsheviks. The only difficulty that may perhaps arise will be in regard to the term. In German there are two words meaning “community”, of which Engels used the one which does not denote a single community, but their totality, a system of communities. In Russian there is no such word, and we may have to choose the French word “commune”, although this also has its drawbacks.

"The Commune was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word"—this is the most theoretically important statement Engels makes. After what has been said above, this statement is perfectly clear. The Commune was ceasing to be a state since it had to suppress, not the majority of the population, but a minority (the exploiters). It had smashed the bourgeois state machine. In place of a special coercive force the population itself came on the scene. All this was a departure from the state in the proper sense of the word. And had the Commune become firmly established, all traces of the state in it would have "withered away" by themselves; it would not have had to “abolish” the institutions of the state—they would have ceased to function as they ceased to have anything to do.

"The 'people's state' has been thrown in our faces by the anarchists". In saying this, Engels above all has in mind Bakunin and his attacks on the German Social-Democrats. Engels admits that these attacks were justified insofar as the "people's state" was as much an absurdity and as much a departure from socialism as the "free people's state". Engels tried to put the

struggle of the German Social-Democrats against the anarchists on the right lines, to make this struggle correct in principle, to rid it of opportunist prejudices concerning the “state”. Unfortunately, Engels' letter was pigeon-holed for 36 years. We shall see farther on that, even after this letter was published, Kautsky persisted in virtually the same mistakes against which Engels had warned.

Bebel replied to Engels in a letter dated September 21, 1875, in which he wrote, among other things, that he "fully agreed" with Engels' opinion of the draft programme, and that he had reproached Liebknecht with readiness to make concessions. (p. 334 of the German edition of Bebel's memoirs, Vol.II) But if we take Bebel's pamphlet, *Our Aims* , we find there, views on the state that are absolutely wrong.

"The state must... be transformed from one based on class rule into a people's state." (*Unsere Ziele* , 1886, p. 14)

This was printed in the ninth (ninth!) edition of Bebel's pamphlet! It is not surprising that opportunist views on the state, so persistently repeated, were absorbed by the German Social-Democrats, especially as Engels' revolutionary interpretations had been safely pigeon-holed, and all the conditions of life were such as to “wean” them from revolution for a long time.

2. Criticism of the Draft of the Erfurt Programme

In analyzing Marxist teachings on the state, the criticism of the draft of the Erfurt Programme, [21] sent by Engels to Kautsky on June 29, 1891, and published only 10 years later in *Neue Zeit* , cannot be ignored; for it is with the opportunist views of the Social-Democrats on questions of state organization that this criticism is mainly concerned.

We shall note in passing that Engels also makes an exceedingly valuable observation on economic questions, which shows how attentively and thoughtfully he watched the various changes occurring in modern capitalism, and how for this reason he was able to foresee to a certain extent the tasks of our present, the imperialist, epoch. Here is that observation: referring to the word “planlessness” (Planlosigkeit), used in the draft programme, as characteristic of capitalism, Engels wrote:

"When we pass from joint-stock companies to trusts which assume control over, and monopolize, whole industries, it is not only private production that ceases, but also planlessness." (*Neue Zeit* , Vol. XX, 1, 1901-02, p. 8)

Here was what is most essential in the theoretical appraisal of the latest phase of capitalism, i.e., imperialism, namely, that capitalism becomes monopoly capitalism. The latter must be emphasized because the erroneous bourgeois reformist assertion that monopoly capitalism or state-monopoly capitalism is no longer capitalism, but can now be called "state socialism" and so on, is very common. The trusts, of course, never provided, do not now provide, and cannot provide complete planning. But however much they do plan, however much the capitalist magnates calculate in advance the volume of production on a national and even on an international scale, and however much they systematically regulate it, we still remain under capitalism—at its new stage, it is true, but still capitalism, without a doubt. The “proximity” of such capitalism to socialism should serve genuine representatives of the proletariat as an argument proving the proximity, facility, feasibility, and urgency of the socialist revolution, and not at all as an argument for tolerating the repudiation of such a revolution and the efforts to make capitalism look more attractive, something which all reformists are trying to do.

But to return to the question of the state. In his letter Engels makes three particularly valuable suggestions: first, in regard to the republic; second, in regard to the connection between the national question and state organization; and, third, in regard to local self-government.

In regard to the republic, Engels made this the focal point of this criticism of the draft of the Erfurt Programme. And when we recall the importance which the Erfurt Programme acquired for all the Social-Democrats of the world, and that it became the model for the whole Second International, we may say without exaggeration that Engels thereby criticizes the opportunism of the whole Second International.

"The political demands of the draft," Engels wrote, "have one great fault. *It lacks* [Engels' italics] precisely what should have been said."

And, later on, he makes it clear that the German Constitution is, strictly speaking, a copy of the extremely reactionary Constitution of 1850, that the

Reichstag is only, as Wilhelm Liebknecht put it, "the fig leaf of absolutism" and that to wish "to transform all the instruments of labor into common property" on the basis of a constitution which legalizes the existence of petty states and the federation of petty German states is an "obvious absurdity".

"To touch on that is dangerous, however," Engels added, knowing only too well that it was impossible legally to include in the programme the demand for a republic in Germany. But he refused to merely accept this obvious consideration which satisfied “everybody”. He continued: "Nevertheless, somehow or other, the thing has to be attacked. How necessary this is is shown precisely at the present time by opportunism, which is gaining ground [einreissende] in a large section of the Social-Democrat press. Fearing a renewal of the Anti-Socialist Law, [22] or recalling all manner of overhasty pronouncements made during the reign of that law, they now want the Party to find the present legal order in Germany adequate for putting through all Party demands by peaceful means...."

Engels particularly stressed the fundamental fact that the German Social-Democrats were prompted by fear of a renewal of the Anti-Socialist Law, and explicitly described it as opportunism; he declared that precisely because there was no republic and no freedom in Germany, the dreams of a “peaceful” path were perfectly absurd. Engels was careful not to tie his hands. He admitted that in republican or very free countries "one can conceive" (only “conceive”!) of a peaceful development towards socialism, but in Germany, he repeated,

"...in Germany, where the government is almost omnipotent and the Reichstag and all other representative bodies have no real power, to advocate such a thing in Germany, where, moreover, there is no need to do so, means removing the fig leaf from absolutism and becoming oneself a screen for its nakedness."

The great majority of the official leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party, which pigeon-holed this advice, have really proved to be a screen for absolutism.

"...In the long run such a policy can only lead one's own party astray. They push general, abstract political questions into the foreground, thereby

concealing the immediate concrete questions, which at the moment of the first great events, the first political crisis, automatically pose themselves. What can result from this except that at the decisive moment the party suddenly proves helpless and that uncertainty and discord on the most decisive issues reign in it because these issues have never been discussed? ...

"This forgetting of the great, the principal considerations for the momentary interests of the day, this struggling and striving for the success of the moment regardless of later consequences, this sacrifice of the future of the movement for its present may be 'honestly' meant, but it is and remains opportunism, and 'honest' opportunism is perhaps the most dangerous of all....

"If one thing is certain it is that our party and the working class can only come to power in the form of the democratic republic. This is even the specific form for the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the Great French Revolution has already shown...."

Engels realized here in a particularly striking form the fundamental idea which runs through all of Marx's works, namely, that the democratic republic is the nearest approach to the dictatorship of the proletariat. For such a republic, without in the least abolishing the rule of capital, and, therefore, the oppression of the masses nd the class struggle, inevitably leads to such an extension, development, unfolding, and intensification of this struggle that, as soon as it becomes possible to meet the fundamental interests of the oppressed masses, this possibility is realized inevitably and solely through the dictatorship of the proletariat, through the leadership of those masses by the proletariat. These, too, are "forgotten words" of Marxism for the whole of the Second International, and the fact that they have been forgotten was demonstrated with particular vividness by the history of the Menshevik Party during the first six months of the Russian revolution of 1917.

On the subject of a federal republic, in connection with the national composition of the population, Engels wrote:

"What should take the place of the present-day Germany [with its reactionary monarchical Constitution and its equally reactionary division

into petty states, a division which perpetuates all the specific features of “Prussianism” instead of dissolving them in Germany as a whole]? In my view, the proletariat can only use the form of the one and indivisible republic. In the gigantic territory of the United States, a federal republic is still, on the whole, a necessity, although in the Eastern states it is already becoming a hindrance. It would be a step forward in Britain where the two islands are peopled by four nations and in spite of a single Parliament three different systems of legislation already exist side by side. In little Switzerland, it has long been a hindrance, tolerable only because Switzerland is content to be a purely passive member of the European state system. For Germany, federalization on the Swiss model would be an enormous step backward. Two points distinguish a union state from a completely unified state: first, that each member state, each canton, has its own civil and criminal legislative and judicial system, and, second, that alongside a popular chamber there is also a federal chamber in which each canton, whether large or small, votes as such." In Germany, the union state is the transition to the completely unified state, and the "revolution from above" of 1866 and 1870 must not be reversed but supplemented by a "movement from below".

Far from being indifferent to the forms of state, Engels, on the contrary, tried to analyze the transitional forms with the utmost thoroughness in order to establish, in accordance with the concrete historical peculiarities of each particular case, from what and to what the given transitional form is passing.

Approaching the matter from the standpoint of the proletariat and the proletarian revolution, Engels, like Marx, upheld democratic centralism, the republic—one and indivisible. He regarded the federal republic either as an exception and a hindrance to development, or as a transition from a monarchy to a centralized republic, as a "step forward" under certain special conditions. And among these special conditions, he puts the national question to the fore.

Although mercilessly criticizing the reactionary nature of small states, and the screening of this by the national question in certain concrete cases, Engels, like Marx, never betrayed the slightest desire to brush aside the national question—a desire of which the Dutch and Polish Marxists, who

proceed from their perfectly justified opposition to the narrow philistine nationalism of “their” little states, are often guilty.

Even in regard to britain, where geographical conditions, a common language and the history of many centuries would seem to have "put an end" to the national question in the various small divisions of the country—even in regard to to that country, Engels reckoned with the plain fact that the national question was not yet a thing of the past, and recognized in consequence that the establishment of a federal republic would be a "step forward". Of course, there is not the slightest hint here of Engels abandoning the criticism of the shortcomings of a federal republic or renouncing the most determined advocacy of, and struggle for, a unified and centralized democratic republic.

But Engels did not at all mean democratic centralism in the bureaucratic sense in which the term is used by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologists, the anarchists among the latter. His idea of centralism did not in the least preclude such broad local self-government as would combine the voluntary defense of the unity of the state by the “communes” and districts, and the complete elimination of all bureaucratic practices and all “ordering” from above. Carrying forward the programme views of Marxism on the state, Engels wrote:

"So, then, a unified republic—but not in the sense of the present French Republic, which is nothing but the Empire established in 1798 without the Emperor. From 1792 to 1798 each French department, each commune [Gemeinde], enjoyed complete self-government on the American model, and this is what we too must have. How self-government is to be organized and how we can manage, without a bureaucracy has been shown to us by America and the first French Republic, and is being shown even today by Australia, Canada and the other English colonies. And a provincial [regional] and communal self-government of this type is far freer than, for instance, Swiss federalism, under which, it is true, the canton is very independent in relation to the Bund [i.e., the federated state as a whole], but is also independent in relation to the district [Bezirk] and the commune. The cantonal governments appoint the district governors [Bezirksstatthalter] and prefects—which is unknown in English-speaking countries and which we want to abolish here as resolutely in the future as the Prussian Landrate and

Regierungsrate " (commissioners, district police chiefs, governors, and in general all officials appointed from above). Accordingly, Engels proposes the following words for the self-government clause in the programme: "Complete self-government for the provinces [gubernias or regions], districts and communes through officials elected by universal suffrage. The abolition of all local and provincial authorities appointed by the state."

I have already had occasion to point out—in *Pravda* (No.68, May 28, 1917), which was suppressed by the government of Kerensky and other "socialist" Ministers—how on this point (of course, not on this point alone by any means) our pseudo-socialist representatives of pseudo-revolutionary pseudo-democracy have made glaring departures from democracy. Naturally, people who have bound themselves by a "coalition" to the imperialist bourgeoisie have remained deaf to this criticism.

It is extremely important to note that Engels, armed with facts, disproved by a most precise example the prejudice which is very widespread, particularly among petty-bourgeois democrats, that a federal republic necessarily means a greater amount of freedom than a centralized republic. This is wrong. It is disproved by the facts cited by Engels regarding the centralized French Republic of 792-98 and the federal Swiss Republic. The really democratic centralized republic gave more freedom than the federal republic. In other words, the greatest amount of local, regional, and other freedom known in history was accorded by a centralized and not a federal republic.

Insufficient attention has been and is being paid in our Party propaganda and agitation to this fact, as, indeed, to the whole question of the federal and the centralized republic and local self-government.

The 1891 Preface to Marx's "The Civil War in France"

In his preface to the third edition of *The Civil War in France* (this preface is dated March 18, 1891, and was originally published in Neue Zeit), Engels, in addition to some interesting incidental remarks on questions concerning the attitude towards the state, gave a remarkably vivid summary of the lessons of the Commune. [23] This summary, made more profound by the entire experience of the 20 years that separated the author from the Commune, and directed expressly against the "superstitious belief in the

state" so widespread in Germany, may justly be called the last word of Marxism on the question under consideration.

In France, Engels observed, the workers emerged with arms from every revolution: "therefore the disarming of the workers was the first commandment for the bourgeois, who were at the helm of the state. Hence, after every revolution won by the workers, a new struggle, ending with the defeat of the workers."

This summary of the experience of bourgeois revolutions is as concise as it is expressive. The essence of the matter—among other things, on the question of the state (has the oppressed class arms?)—is here remarkably well-grasped. It is precisely this essence that is most often evaded by both professors influenced by bourgeois ideology, and by petty-bourgeois democrats. In the Russian revolution of 1917, the honor (Cavaignac honor) of blabbing this secret of bourgeois revolutions fell to the Menshevik, would-be Marxist, Tsereteli. In his “historic” speech of June 11, Tsereteli blurted out that the bourgeoisie were determined to disarm the Petrograd workers—presenting, of course, this decision as his own, and as a necessity for the “state” in general!

Tsereteli's historical speech of June 11 will, of course, serve every historian of the revolution of 1917 as a graphic illustration of how the Social-Revolutionary and Menshevik bloc, led by Mr. Tsereteli, deserted to the bourgeoisie against the revolutionary proletariat.

Another incidental remark of Engels', also connected with the question of the state, deals with religion. It is well-known that the German Social-Democrats, as they degenerated and became increasingly opportunist, slipped more and more frequently into the philistine misinterpretation of the celebrated formula: "Religion is to be declared a private matter." That is, the formula was twisted to mean that religion was a private matter even for the party of the revolutionary proletariat!! It was against this complete betrayal of the revolutionary programme of the proletariat that Engels vigorously protested. In 1891 he saw only the very feeble beginnings of opportunism in his party, and, therefore, he expressed himself with extreme caution:

"As almost only workers, or recognized representatives of the workers, sat in the Commune, its decisions bore a decidedly proletarian character. Either

they decreed reforms which the republican bourgeoisie had failed to pass solely out of cowardice, but which provided a necessary basis for the free activity of the working class—such as the realization of the principle that *in relation to the state* religion is a purely private matter—or the Commune promulgated decrees which were in the direct interest of the working class and in part cut deeply into the old order of society."

Engels deliberately emphasized the words "in relation to the state" as a straight thrust at at German opportunism, which had declared religion to be a private matter in relation to the party, thus degrading the party of the revolutionary proletariat to the level of the most vulgar "free-thinking" philistinism, which is prepared to allow a non-denominational status, but which renounces the party struggle against the opium of religion which stupefies the people.

The future historian of the German Social-Democrats, in tracing the roots of their shameful bankruptcy in 1914, will find a fair amount of interesting material on this question, beginning with the evasive declarations in the articles of the party's ideological leader, Kautsky, which throw the door wide open to opportunism, and ending with the attitude of the party towards the "Los-von-Kirche-Bewegung" [24] (the "Leave-the-Church" movement) in 1913.

But let us see how, 20 years after the Commune, Engels summed up its lessons for the fighting proletariat.

Here are the lessons to which Engels attached prime importance:

"...It was precisely the oppressing power of the former centralized government, army, political parties, bureaucracy, which Napoleon had created in 1798 and which every new government had since then taken over as a welcome instrument and used against its opponents—it was this power which was to fall everywhere, just as it had fallen in Paris.

"From the very outset the Commune had to recognize that the working class, once in power, could not go on managing with the old state machine; that in order not to lose again its only just-gained supremacy, this working class must, on the one hand, do away with all the old machinery of oppression previously used against it itself, and, on the other, safeguard

itself against its own deputies and officials, by declaring them all, without exception, subject to recall at any time...."

Engels emphasized once again that not only under a monarchy, but also under a democratic republic the state remains a state, i.e., it retains its fundamental distinguishing feature of transforming the officials, the 'servants of society", its organs, into the masters of society.

"Against this transformation of the state and the organs of the state from servants of society into masters of society—an inevitable transformation in all previous states—the Commune used two infallible means. In the first place, it filled all posts—administrative, judicial, and educational—by election on the basis of universal suffrage of all concerned, subject to recall at any time by the electors. And, in the second place, it paid all officials, high or low, only the wages received by other workers. The highest salary paid by the Commune to anyone was 6,000 francs. In this way a dependable barrier to place-hunting and careerism was set up, even apart from the binding mandates to delegates to representative bodies, which were added besides...."

Engels here approached the interesting boundary line at which consistent democracy, on the one hand, is transformed into socialism and, on the other, demands socialism. For, in order to abolish the state, it is necessary to convert the functions of the civil service into the simple operations of control and accounting that are within the scope and ability of the vast majority of the population, and, subsequently, of every single individual. And if careerism is to be abolished completely, it must be made impossible for “honorable” though profitless posts in the Civil Service to be used as a springboard to highly lucrative posts in banks or joint-stock companies, as constantly happens in all the freest capitalist countries.

Engels, however, did not make the mistake some Marxists make in dealing, for example, with the question of the right of nations to self-determination, when they argue that it is impossible under capitalism and will be superfluous under socialism. This seemingly clever but actually incorrect statement might be made in regard to any democratic institution, including moderate salaries for officials, because fully consistent democracy is impossible under capitalism, and under socialism all democracy will wither away.

This is a sophism like the old joke about a man becoming bald by losing one more hair.

To develop democracy to the utmost, to find the forms for this development, to test them by practice, and so forth—all this is one of the component tasks of the struggle for the social revolution. Taken separately, no kind of democracy will bring socialism. But in actual life democracy will never be "taken separately"; it will be "taken together" with other things, it will exert its influence on economic life as well, will stimulate its transformation; and in its turn it will be influenced by economic development, and so on. This is the dialectics of living history.

Engels continued:

"...This shattering [Sprengung] of the former state power and its replacement by a new and truly democratic one is described in detail in the third section of *The Civil War* . But it was necessary to touch briefly here once more on some of its features, because in Germany particularly the superstitious belief in the state has passed from philosophy into the general consciousness of the bourgeoisie and even of many workers. According to the philosophical conception, the state is the 'realization of the idea', or the Kingdom of God on earth, translated into philosophical terms, the sphere in which eternal truth and justice are, or should be, realized. And from this follows a superstitious reverence for the state and everything connected with it, which takes root the more readily since people are accustomed from childhood to imagine that the affairs and interests common to the whole of society could not be looked after other than as they have been looked after in the past, that is, through the state and its lucratively positioned officials. And people think they have taken quite an extraordinarily bold step forward when they have rid themselves of belief in hereditary monarchy and swear by the democratic republic. In reality, however, the state is nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and indeed in the democratic republic no less than in the monarchy. And at best it is an evil inherited by the proletariat after its victorious struggle for class supremacy, whose worst sides the victorious proletariat will have to lop off as speedily as possible, just as the Commune had to, until a generation reared in new, free social conditions is able to discard the entire lumber of the state."

Engels warned the Germans not to forget the principles of socialism with regard to the state in general in connection with the substitution of a republic for the monarchy. His warnings now read like a veritable lesson to the Tseretelis and Chernovs, who in their “coalition” practice have revealed a superstitious belief in, and a superstitious reverence for, the state!

Two more remarks.
1. Engels' statement that in a democratic republic, "no less" than in a monarchy, the state remains a "machine for the oppression of one class by another" by no means signifies that the form of oppression makes no difference to the proletariat, as some anarchists “teach”. A wider, freer and more open form of the class struggle and of class oppression vastly assists the proletariat in its struggle for the abolition of classes in general.

2. Why will only a new generation be able to discard the entire lumber of the state? This question is bound up with that of overcoming democracy, with which we shall deal now.

Engels on the Overcoming of Democracy
Engels came to express his views on this subject when establishing that the term "Social-Democrat" was scientifically wrong.

In a preface to an edition of his articles of the seventies on various subjects, mostly on “international” questions (*Internationales aus dem Volkstaat*), dated January 3, 1894, i.e., written a year and a half before his death, Engels wrote that in all his articles he used the word “Communist”, and not "Social-Democrat", because at that time the Proudhonists in France and the Lassalleans [25] in Germany called themselves Social-Democrats.

"... For Marx and myself," continued Engels, "it was therefore absolutely impossible to use such a loose term to characterize our special point of view. Today things are different, and the word ["Social-Democrat"] may perhaps pass muster [mag passieren], inexact [unpassend, unsuitable] though it still is for a party whose economic programme is not merely socialist in general, but downright communist, and whose ultimate political aim is to overcome the whole state and, consequently, democracy as well. The names of real political parties, however, are never wholly appropriate; the party develops while the name stays." [26]

The dialectician Engels remained true to dialectics to the end of his days. Marx and I, he said, had a splendid, scientifically exact name for the party, but there was no real party, i.e., no mass proletarian party. Now (at the end of the 19th century) there was a real party, but its name was scientifically wrong. Never mind, it would "pass muster", so long as the party developed, so long as the scientific—in accuracy of the name, was not hidden from it and did not hinder its development in the right direction!

Perhaps some wit would console us Bolsheviks in the manner of Engels: we have a real party, it is developing splendidly; even such a meaningless and ugly term as “Bolshevik” will "pass muster", although it expresses nothing whatever but the purely accidental fact that at the Brussels-London Congress of 1903 we were in the majority. Perhaps now that the persecution of our Party by republicans and “revolutionary” petty-bourgeois democrats in July and August has earned the name “Bolshevik” such universal respect, now that, in addition, this persecution marks the tremendous historical progress our Party has made in its real development—perhaps now even I might hesitate to insist on the suggestion I made in April to change the name of our Party. Perhaps I would propose a “compromise” to my comrades, namely, to call ourselves the Communist Party, but to retain the word “Bolshevik” in brackets.

But the question of the name of the Party is incomparably less important than the question of the attitude of the revolutionary proletariat to the state.

In the usual argument about the state, the mistake is constantly made against which Engels warned and which we have in passing indicated above, namely, it is constantly forgotten that the abolition of the state means also the abolition of democracy; that the withering away of the state means the withering away of democracy.

At first sight this assertion seems exceedingly strange and incomprehensible; indeed, someone may even suspect us of expecting the advent of a system of society in which the principle of subordination of the minority to the majority will not be observed—for democracy means the recognition of this very principle.

No, democracy is not identical with the subordination of the minority to the majority. Democracy is a state which recognizes the subordination of the

minority to the majority, i.e., an organization for the systematic use of force by one class against another, by one section of the population against another.

We set ourselves the ultimate aim of abolishing the state, i.e., all organized and systematic violence, all use of violence against people in general. We do not expect the advent of a system of society in which the principle of subordination of the minority to the majority will not be observed. In striving for socialism, however, we are convinced that it will develop into communism and, therefore, that the need for violence against people in general, for the subordination of one man to another, and of one section of the population to another, will vanish altogether since people will become accustomed to observing the elementary conditions of social life without violence and without subordination.

In order to emphasize this element of habit, Engels speaks of a new generation, "reared in new, free social conditions", which will "be able to discard the entire lumber of the state"—of any state, including the democratic-republican state.

In order to explain this, it is necessary to analyze the economic basis of the withering away of the state.

Chapter 5: The Economic Basis of the Withering Away of the State

Marx explains this question most thoroughly in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (letter to Bracke, May 5, 1875, which was not published until 1891 when it was printed in Neue Zeit, vol. IX, 1, and which has appeared in Russian in a special edition). The polemical part of this remarkable work, which contains a criticism of Lassalleanism, has, so to speak, overshadowed its positive part, namely, the analysis of the connection between the development of communism and the withering away of the state.

1. Presentation of the Question by Marx

From a superficial comparison of Marx's letter to Bracke of May 5, 1875, with Engels' letter to Bebel of March 28, 1875, which we examined above, it might appear that Marx was much more of a "champion of the state" than Engels, and that the difference of opinion between the two writers on the question of the state was very considerable.

Engels suggested to Bebel that all chatter about the state be dropped altogether, that the word “state” be eliminated from the programme altogether and the word “community” substituted for it. Engels even declared that the Commune was long a state in the proper sense of the word. Yet Marx even spoke of the "future state in communist society", i.e., he would seem to recognize the need for the state even under communism.

But such a view would be fundamentally wrong. A closer examination shows that Marx's and Engels' views on the state and its withering away were completely identical, and that Marx's expression quoted above refers to the state in the process of withering away.

Clearly, there can be no question of specifying the moment of the future "withering away", the more so since it will obviously be a lengthy process. The apparent difference between Marx and Engels is due to the fact that they dealt with different subjects and pursued different aims. Engels set out to show Bebel graphically, sharply, and in broad outline the utter absurdity of the current prejudices concerning the state (shared to no small degree by

Lassalle). Marx only touched upon this question in passing, being interested in another subject, namely, the development of communist society.

The whole theory of Marx is the application of the theory of development—in its most consistent, complete, considered and pithy form—to modern capitalism. Naturally, Marx was faced with the problem of applying this theory both to the forthcoming collapse of capitalism and to the future development of future communism.

On the basis of what facts, then, can the question of the future development of future communism be dealt with?

On the basis of the fact that it has its origin in capitalism, that it develops historically from capitalism, that it is the result of the action of a social force to which capitalism gave birth. There is no trace of an attempt on Marx's part to make up a utopia, to indulge in idle guess-work about what cannot be known. Marx treated the question of communism in the same way as a naturalist would treat the question of the development of, say, a new biological variety, once he knew that it had originated in such and such a way and was changing in such and such a definite direction.

To begin with, Marx brushed aside the confusion the Gotha Programme brought into the question of the relationship between state and society.

He wrote:

"'Present-day society' is capitalist society, which exists in all civilized countries, being more or less free from medieval admixture, more or less modified by the particular historical development of each country, more or less developed. On the other hand, the 'present-day state' changes with a country's frontier. It is different in the Prusso-German Empire from what it is in Switzerland, and different in England from what it is in the United States. 'The present-day state' is, therefore, a fiction.

"Nevertheless, the different states of the different civilized countries, in spite of their motley diversity of form, all have this in common, that they are based on modern bourgeois society, only one more or less capitalistically developed. They have, therefore, also certain essential characteristics in common. In this sense it is possible to speak of the

'present-day state', in contrast with the future, in which its present root, bourgeois society, will have died off.

"The question then arises: what transformation will the state undergo in communist society? In other words, what social functions will remain in existence there that are analogous to present state functions? This question can only be answered scientifically, and one does not get a flea-hop nearer to the problem by a thousandfold combination of the word people with the word state." [27]

After thus ridiculing all talk about a "people's state", Marx formulated the question and gave warning, as it were, that those seeking a scientific answer to it should use only firmly-established scientific data.

The first fact that has been established most accurately by the whole theory of development, by science as a whole—a fact that was ignored by the utopians, and is ignored by the present-day opportunists, who are afraid of the socialist revolution—is that, historically, there must undoubtedly be a special stage, or a special phase, of transition from capitalism to communism.

2. The Transition from Capitalism to Communism

Marx continued:

"Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat."

Marx bases this conclusion on an analysis of the role played by the proletariat in modern capitalist society, on the data concerning the development of this society, and on the irreconcilability of the antagonistic interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

Previously the question was put as follows: to achieve its emancipation, the proletariat must overthrow the bourgeoisie, win political power and establish its revolutionary dictatorship.

Now the question is put somewhat differently: the transition from capitalist society—which is developing towards communism—to communist society

is impossible without a "political transition period", and the state in this period can only be the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

What, then, is the relation of this dictatorship to democracy?

We have seen that the *Communist Manifesto* simply places side by side the two concepts: "to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class" and "to win the battle of democracy". On the basis of all that has been said above, it is possible to determine more precisely how democracy changes in the transition from capitalism to communism.

In capitalist society, providing it develops under the most favorable conditions, we have a more or less complete democracy in the democratic republic. But this democracy is always hemmed in by the narrow limits set by capitalist exploitation, and consequently always remains, in effect, a democracy for the minority, only for the propertied classes, only for the rich. Freedom in capitalist society always remains about the same as it was in the ancient Greek republics: freedom for the slave owners. Owing to the conditions of capitalist exploitation, the modern wage slaves are so crushed by want and poverty that "they cannot be bothered with democracy", "cannot be bothered with politics"; in the ordinary, peaceful course of events, the majority of the population is debarred from participation in public and political life.

The correctness of this statement is perhaps most clearly confirmed by Germany, because constitutional legality steadily endured there for a remarkably long time—nearly half a century (1871-1914)—and during this period the Social-Democrats were able to achieve far more than in other countries in the way of "utilizing legality", and organized a larger proportion of the workers into a political party than anywhere else in the world.

What is this largest proportion of politically conscious and active wage slaves that has so far been recorded in capitalist society? One million members of the Social-Democratic Party—out of 15,000,000 wage-workers! Three million organized in trade unions—out of 15,000,000!

Democracy for an insignificant minority, democracy for the rich—that is the democracy of capitalist society. If we look more closely into the

machinery of capitalist democracy, we see everywhere, in the “petty”—supposedly petty—details of the suffrage (residential qualifications, exclusion of women, etc.), in the technique of the representative institutions, in the actual obstacles to the right of assembly (public buildings are not for “paupers”!), in the purely capitalist organization of the daily press, etc., etc.,—we see restriction after restriction upon democracy. These restrictions, exceptions, exclusions, obstacles for the poor seem slight, especially in the eyes of one who has never known want himself and has never been inclose contact with the oppressed classes in their mass life (and nine out of 10, if not 99 out of 100, bourgeois publicists and politicians come under this category); but in their sum total these restrictions exclude and squeeze out the poor from politics, from active participation in democracy.

Marx grasped this essence of capitalist democracy splendidly when, in analyzing the experience of the Commune, he said that the oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class shall represent and repress them in parliament!

But from this capitalist democracy—that is inevitably narrow and stealthily pushes aside the poor, and is therefore hypocritical and false through and through—forward development does not proceed simply, directly and smoothly, towards "greater and greater democracy", as the liberal professors and petty-bourgeois opportunists would have us believe. No, forward development, i.e ., development towards communism, proceeds through the dictatorship of the proletariat, and cannot do otherwise, for the resistance of the capitalist exploiters cannot be broken by anyone else or in any other way.

And the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., the organization of the vanguard of the oppressed as the ruling class for the purpose of suppressing the oppressors, cannot result merely in an expansion of democracy. Simultaneously with an immense expansion of democracy, which for the first time becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the money-bags, the dictatorship of the proletariat imposes a series of restrictions on the freedom of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists. We must suppress them in order to free humanity from wage slavery, their resistance must be crushed by force; it is clear that

there is no freedom and no democracy where there is suppression and where there is violence.

Engels expressed this splendidly in his letter to Bebel when he said, as the reader will remember, that "the proletariat needs the state, not in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist".

Democracy for the vast majority of the people, and suppression by force, i.e., exclusion from democracy, of the exploiters and oppressors of the people—this is the change democracy undergoes during the transition from capitalism to communism.

Only in communist society, when the resistance of the capitalists have disappeared, when there are no classes (i.e., when there is no distinction between the members of society as regards their relation to the social means of production), only then "the state... ceases to exist", and "it becomes possible to speak of freedom". Only then will a truly complete democracy become possible and be realized, a democracy without any exceptions whatsoever. And only then will democracy begin to wither away, owing to the simple fact that, freed from capitalist slavery, from the untold horrors, savagery, absurdities, and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually become accustomed to observing the elementary rules of social intercourse that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all copy-book maxims. They will become accustomed to observing them without force, without coercion, without subordination, without the special apparatus for coercion called the state.

The expression "the state withers away" is very well-chosen, for it indicates both the gradual and the spontaneous nature of the process. Only habit can, and undoubtedly will, have such an effect; for we see around us on millions of occassions how readily people become accustomed to observing the necessary rules of social intercourse when there is no exploitation, when there is nothing that arouses indignation, evokes protest and revolt, and creates the need for suppression.

And so in capitalist society we have a democracy that is curtailed, wretched, false, a democracy only for the rich, for the minority. The dictatorship of the proletariat, the period of transition to communism, will for the first time

create democracy for the people, for the majority, along with the necessary suppression of the exploiters of the minority. Communism alone is capable of providing really complete democracy, and the more complete it is, the sooner it will become unnecessary and wither away of its own accord.

In other words, under capitalism we have the state in the proper sense of the word, that is, a special machine for the suppression of one class by another, and, what is more, of the majority by the minority. Naturally, to be successful, such an undertaking as the systematic suppression of the exploited majority by the exploiting minority calls for the utmost ferocity and savagery in the matter of suppressing, it calls for seas of blood, through which mankind is actually wading its way in slavery, serfdom and wage labor.

Furthermore, during the transition from capitalism to communism suppression is still necessary, but it is now the suppression of the exploiting minority by the exploited majority. A special apparatus, a special machine for suppression, the “state”, is still necessary, but this is now a transitional state. It is no longer a state in the proper sense of the word; for the suppression of the minority of exploiters by the majority of the wage slaves of yesterday is comparatively so easy, simple and natural a task that it will entail far less bloodshed than the suppression of the risings of slaves, serfs or wage-laborers, and it will cost mankind far less. And it is compatible with the extension of democracy to such an overwhelming majority of the population that the need for a special machine of suppression will begin to disappear. Naturally, the exploiters are unable to suppress the people without a highly complex machine for performing this task, but the people can suppress the exploiters even with a very simple “machine”, almost without a “machine”, without a special apparatus, by the simple organization of the armed people (such as the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, we would remark, running ahead).

Lastly, only communism makes the state absolutely unnecessary, for there is nobody to be suppressed—“nobody” in the sense of a class, of a systematic struggle against a definite section of the population. We are not utopians, and do not in the least deny the possibility and inevitability of excesses on the part of *individual persons* , or the need to stop such excesses. In the first place, however, no special machine, no special apparatus of suppression, is

needed for this: this will be done by the armed people themselves, as simply and as readily as any crowd of civilized people, even in modern society, interferes to put a stop to a scuffle or to prevent a woman from being assaulted. And, secondly, we know that the fundamental social cause of excesses, which consist in the violation of the rules of social intercourse, is the exploitation of the people, their wants and their poverty. With the removal of this chief cause, excesses will inevitably begin to "wither away". We do not know how quickly and in what succession, but we do know they will wither away. With their withering away the state will also wither away.

Without building utopias, Marx defined more fully what can be defined now regarding this future, namely, the differences between the lower and higher phases (levels, stages) of communist society.

3. The First Phase of Communist Society

In the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* , Marx goes into detail to disprove Lassalle's idea that under socialism the worker will receive the “undiminished” or "full product of his labor". Marx shows that from the whole of the social labor of society there must be deducted a reserve fund, a fund for the expansion of production, a fund for the replacement of the "wear and tear" of machinery, and so on. Then, from the means of consumption, must be a fund deducted for administrative expenses, for schools, hospitals, old people's homes, and so on.

Instead of Lassalle's hazy, obscure, general phrase ("the full product of his labor to the worker"), Marx makes a sober estimate of exactly how socialist society will have to manage its affairs. Marx proceeds to make a concrete analysis of the conditions of life of a society in which there will be no capitalism, and says:

"What we have to deal with here [in analyzing the programme of the workers' party] is a communist society, not as it has developed on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it emerges from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally, and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it comes."

It is this communist society, which has just emerged into the light of day out of the womb of capitalism and which is in every respect stamped with the

birthmarks of the old society, that Marx terms the “first”, or lower, phase of communist society.

The means of production are no longer the private property of individuals. The means of production belong to the whole of society. Every member of society, performing a certain part of the socially-necessary work, receives a certificate from society to the effect that he has done a certain amount of work. And with this certificate he receives from the public store of consumer goods a corresponding quantity of products. After a deduction is made of the amount of labor which goes to the public fund, every worker, therefore, receives from society as much as he has given to it.

“Equality” apparently reigns supreme.

But when Lassalle, having in view such a social order (usually called socialism, but termed by Marx the first phase of communism), says that this is "equitable distribution", that this is "the equal right of all to an equal product of labor", Lassalle is mistaken and Marx exposes the mistake.

"Hence, the equal right," says Marx, in this case still certainly conforms to "bourgeois law", which,like all law, implies inequality. All law is an application of an equal measure to different people who in fact are not alike, are not equal to one another. That is why the "equal right" is a violation of equality and an injustice. In fact, everyone, having performed as much social labor as another, receives an equal share of the social product (after the above-mentioned deductions).

But people are not alike: one is strong, another is weak; one is married, another is not; one has more children, another has less, and so on. And the conclusion Marx draws is:

"...With an equal performance of labor, and hence an equal share in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, one will be richer than another, and so on. To avoid all these defects, the right instead of being equal would have to be unequal."

The first phase of communism, therefore, cannot yet provide justice and equality; differences, and unjust differences, in wealth will still persist, but the exploitation of man by man will have become impossible because it will be impossible to seize the means of production—the factories, machines,

land, etc.—and make them private property. In smashing Lassalle's petty-bourgeois, vague phrases about “equality” and “justice” in general, Marx shows the course of development of communist society, which is compelled to abolish at first only the “injustice” of the means of production seized by individuals, and which is unable at once to eliminate the other injustice, which consists in the distribution of consumer goods "according to the amount of labor performed" (and not according to needs).

The vulgar economists, including the bourgeois professors and “our” Tugan, constantly reproach the socialists with forgetting the inequality of people and with “dreaming” of eliminating this inequality. Such a reproach, as we see, only proves the extreme ignorance of the bourgeois ideologists.

Marx not only most scrupulously takes account of the inevitable inequality of men, but he also takes into account the fact that the mere conversion of the means of production into the common property of the whole society (commonly called “socialism”) does not remove the defects of distribution and the inequality of "bourgeois laws" which continues to prevail so long as products are divided "according to the amount of labor performed". Continuing, Marx says:

"But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged, after prolonged birth pangs, from capitalist society. Law can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby."

And so, in the first phase of communist society (usually called socialism) "bourgeois law" is not abolished in its entirety, but only in part, only in proportion to the economic revolution so far attained, i.e., only in respect of the means of production. "Bourgeois law" recognizes them as the private property of individuals. Socialism converts them into common property. To that extent—and to that extent alone—"bourgeois law" disappears.

However, it persists as far as its other part is concerned; it persists in the capacity of regulator (determining factor) in the distribution of products and the allotment of labor among the members of society. The socialist principle, "He who does not work shall not eat", is already realized; the other socialist principle, "An equal amount of products for an equal amount of labor", is also already realized. But this is not yet communism, and it

does not yet abolish "bourgeois law", which gives unequal individuals, in return for unequal (really unequal) amounts of labor, equal amounts of products.

This is a “defect”, says Marx, but it is unavoidable in the first phase of communism; for if we are not to indulge in utopianism, we must not think that having overthrown capitalism people will at once learn to work for society without any rules of law. Besides, the abolition of capitalism does not immediately create the economic prerequisites for such a change.

Now, there are no other rules than those of "bourgeois law". To this extent, therefore, there still remains the need for a state, which, while safeguarding the common ownership of the means of production, would safeguard equality in labor and in the distribution of products.

The state withers away insofar as there are no longer any capitalists, any classes, and, consequently, no class can be suppressed.

But the state has not yet completely withered away, since there still remains the safeguarding of "bourgeois law", which sanctifies actual inequality. For the state to wither away completely, complete communism is necessary.

4. The Higher Phase of Communist Society
Marx continues:

"In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labor, and with it also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished, after labor has become not only a livelihood but life's prime want, after the productive forces have increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois law be left behind in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!"

Only now can we fully appreciate the correctness of Engels' remarks mercilessly ridiculing the absurdity of combining the words “freedom” and “state”. So long as the state exists there is no freedom. When there is freedom, there will be no state.

The economic basis for the complete withering away of the state is such a high state of development of communism at which the antithesis between mental and physical labor disappears, at which there consequently disappears one of the principal sources of modern social inequality—a source, moreover, which cannot on any account be removed immediately by the mere conversion of the means of production into public property, by the mere expropriation of the capitalists.

This expropriation will make it possible for the productive forces to develop to a tremendous extent. And when we see how incredibly capitalism is already retarding this development, when we see how much progress could be achieved on the basis of the level of technique already attained, we are entitled to say with the fullest confidence that the expropriation of the capitalists will inevitably result in an enormous development of the productive forces of human society. But how rapidly this development will proceed, how soon it will reach the point of breaking away from the division of labor, of doing away with the antithesis between mental and physical labor, of transforming labor into "life's prime want"—we do not and cannot know.

That is why we are entitled to speak only of the inevitable withering away of the state, emphasizing the protracted nature of this process and its dependence upon the rapidity of development of the higher phase of communism, and leaving the question of the time required for, or the concrete forms of, the withering away quite open, because there is no material for answering these questions.

The state will be able to wither away completely when society adopts the rule: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs", i.e., when people have become so accustomed to observing the fundamental rules of social intercourse and when their labor has become so productive that they will voluntarily work according to their ability. "The narrow horizon of bourgeois law", which compels one to calculate with the heartlessness of a Shylock whether one has not worked half an hour more than anybody else—this narrow horizon will then be left behind. There will then be no need for society, in distributing the products, to regulate the quantity to be received by each; each will take freely "according to his needs".

From the bourgeois point of view, it is easy to declare that such a social order is "sheer utopia" and to sneer at the socialists for promising everyone the right to receive from society, without any control over the labor of the individual citizen, any quantity of truffles, cars, pianos, etc. Even to this day, most bourgeois “savants” confine themselves to sneering in this way, thereby betraying both their ignorance and their selfish defense of capitalism.

Ignorance—for it has never entered the head of any socialist to “promise” that the higher phase of the development of communism will arrive; as for the greatest socialists' forecast that it will arrive, it presupposes not the present ordinary run of people, who, like the seminary students in Pomyalovsky's stories, [28] are capable of damaging the stocks of public wealth "just for fun", and of demanding the impossible.

Until the “higher” phase of communism arrives, the socialists demand the strictest control by society and by the state over the measure of labor and the measure of consumption; but this control must start with the expropriation of the capitalists, with the establishment of workers' control over the capitalists, and must be exercised not by a state of bureaucrats, but by a state of armed workers.

The selfish defense of capitalism by the bourgeois ideologists (and their hangers-on, like the Tseretelis , Chernovs, and Co.) consists in that they substitute arguing and talk about the distant future for the vital and burning question of present-day politics, namely, the expropriation of the capitalists, the conversion of all citizens into workers and other employees of one huge “syndicate”—the whole state—and the complete subordination of the entire work of this syndicate to a genuinely democratic state, the state of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

In fact, when a learned professor, followed by the philistine, followed in turn by the Tseretelis and Chernovs, talks of wild utopias, of the demagogic promises of the Bolsheviks, of the impossibility of “introducing” socialism, it is the higher stage, or phase, of communism he has in mind, which no one has ever promised or even thought to “introduce”, because, generally speaking, it cannot be “introduced”.

And this brings us to the question of the scientific distinction between socialism and communism which Engels touched on in his above-quoted argument about the incorrectness of the name "Social-Democrat". Politically, the distinction between the first, or lower, and the higher phase of communism will in time, probably, be tremendous. But it would be ridiculous to recognize this distinction now, under capitalism, and only individual anarchists, perhaps, could invest it with primary importance (if there still are people among the anarchists who have learned nothing from the “Plekhanov ” conversion of the Kropotkins, of Grave, Corneliseen , and other “stars ” of anarchism into social-chauvinists or " anarcho-trenchists" , as Ghe , one of the few anarchists who have still preserved a sense of humor and a conscience, has put it).

But the scientific distinction between socialism and communism is clear. What is usually called socialism was termed by Marx the “first”, or lower, phase of communist society. Insofar as the means of production becomes common property, the word “communism” is also applicable here, providing we do not forget that this is not complete communism. The great significance of Marx's explanations is that here, too, he consistently applies materialist dialectics, the theory of development, and regards communism as something which develops out of capitalism. Instead of scholastically invented, “concocted” definitions and fruitless disputes over words (What is socialism? What is communism?), Marx gives an analysis of what might be called the stages of the economic maturity of communism.

In its first phase, or first stage, communism cannot as yet be fully mature economically and entirely free from traditions or vestiges of capitalism. Hence the interesting phenomenon that communism in its first phase retains "the narrow horizon of bourgeois law". Of course, bourgeois law in regard to the distribution of consumer goods inevitably presupposes the existence of the bourgeois state, for law is nothing without an apparatus capable of enforcing the observance of the rules of law.

It follows that under communism there remains for a time not only bourgeois law, but even the bourgeois state, without the bourgeoisie!

This may sound like a paradox or simply a dialectical conundrum of which Marxism is often accused by people who have not taken the slightest trouble to study its extraordinarily profound content.

But in fact, remnants of the old, surviving in the new, confront us in life at every step, both in nature and in society. And Marx did not arbitrarily insert a scrap of “bourgeois” law into communism, but indicated what is economically and politically inevitable in a society emerging out of the womb of capitalism.

Democracy means equality. The great significance of the proletariat's struggle for equality and of equality as a slogan will be clear if we correctly interpret it as meaning the abolition of classes. But democracy means only formal equality. And as soon as equality is achieved for all members of society in relation to ownership of the means of production, that is, equality of labor and wages, humanity will inevitably be confronted with the question of advancing further from formal equality to actual equality, i.e., to the operation of the rule "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs". By what stages, by means of what practical measures humanity will proceed to this supreme aim we do not and cannot know. But it is important to realize how infinitely mendacious is the ordinary bourgeois conception of socialism as something lifeless, rigid, fixed once and for all, whereas in reality only socialism will be the beginning of a rapid, genuine, truly mass forward movement, embracing first the majority and then the whole of the population, in all spheres of public and private life.

Democracy is of enormous importance to the working class in its struggle against the capitalists for its emancipation. But democracy is by no means a boundary not to be overstepped; it is only one of the stages on the road from feudalism to capitalism, and from capitalism to communism.

Democracy is a form of the state, it represents, on the one hand, the organized, systematic use of force against persons; but, on the other hand, it signifies the formal recognition of equality of citizens, the equal right of all to determine the structure of, and to administer, the state. This, in turn, results in the fact that, at a certain stage in the development of democracy, it first welds together the class that wages a revolutionary struggle against capitalism—the proletariat, and enables it to crush, smash to atoms, wipe off the face of the earth the bourgeois, even the republican-bourgeois, state machine, the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy and to substitute for them a more democratic state machine, but a state machine nevertheless,

in the shape of armed workers who proceed to form a militia involving the entire population.

Here "quantity turns into quality": such a degree of democracy implies overstepping the boundaries of bourgeois society and beginning its socialist reorganization. If really all take part in the administration of the state, capitalism cannot retain its hold. The development of capitalism, in turn, creates the preconditions that enable really “all” to take part in the administration of the state. Some of these preconditions are: universal literacy, which has already been achieved in a number of the most advanced capitalist countries, then the "training and disciplining" of millions of workers by the huge, complex, socialized apparatus of the postal service, railways, big factories, large-scale commerce, banking, etc., etc.

Given these economic preconditions, it is quite possible, after the overthrow of the capitalists and the bureaucrats, to proceed immediately, overnight, to replace them in the control over production and distribution, in the work of keeping account of labor and products, by the armed workers, by the whole of the armed population. (The question of control and accounting should not be confused with the question of the scientifically trained staff of engineers, agronomists, and so on. These gentlemen are working today in obedience to the wishes of the capitalists and will work even better tomorrow in obedience to the wishes of the armed workers.)

Accounting and control—that is *mainly* what is needed for the "smooth working", for the proper functioning, of the *first phase* of communist society. *All* citizens are transformed into hired employees of the state, which consists of the armed workers. *All* citizens becomes employees and workers of a *single* countrywide state “syndicate”. All that is required is that they should work equally, do their proper share of work, and get equal pay; the accounting and control necessary for this have been *simplified* by capitalism to the utmost and reduced to the extraordinarily simple operations—which any literate person can perform—of supervising and recording, knowledge of the four rules of arithmetic, and issuing appropriate receipts. [29]

When the *majority* of the people begin independently and everywhere to keep such accounts and exercise such control over the capitalists (now

converted into employees) and over the intellectual gentry who preserve their capitalist habits, this control will really become universal, general, and popular; and there will be no getting away from it, there will be "nowhere to go".

The whole of society will have become a single office and a single factory, with equality of labor and pay.

But this “factory” discipline, which the proletariat, after defeating the capitalists, after overthrowing the exploiters, will extend to the whole of society, is by no means our ideal, or our ultimate goal. It is only a necessary *step* for thoroughly cleansing society of all the infamies and abominations of capitalist exploitation, *and for further* progress.

From the moment all members of society, or at least the vast majority, have learned to administer the state *themselves* , have taken this work into their own hands, have organized control over the insignificant capitalist minority, over the gentry who wish to preserve their capitalist habits and over the workers who have been thoroughly corrupted by capitalism—from this moment the need for government of any kind begins to disappear altogether. The more complete the democracy, the nearer the moment when it becomes unnecessary. The more democratic the “state” which consists of the armed workers, and which is "no longer a state in the proper sense of the word", the more rapidly *every form* of state begins to wither away.

For when *all* have learned to administer and actually to independently administer social production, independently keep accounts and exercise control over the parasites, the sons of the wealthy, the swindlers and other "guardians of capitalist traditions", the escape from this popular accounting and control will inevitably become so incredibly difficult, such a rare exception, and will probably be accompanied by such swift and severe punishment (for the armed workers are practical men and not sentimental intellectuals, and they scarcely allow anyone to trifle with them), that the *necessity* of observing the simple, fundamental rules of the community will very soon become a *habit* .

Then the door will be thrown wide open for the transition from the first phase of communist society to its higher phase, and with it to the complete withering away of the state.

Chapter 6: The Vulgarism of Marxism by the Opportunists

The question of the relation of the state to the social revolution, and of the social revolution to the state, like the question of revolution generally, was given very little attention by the leading theoreticians and publicists of the Second International (1889-1914). But the most characteristic thing about the process of the gradual growth of opportunism that led to the collapse of the Second International in 1914 is the fact that even when these people were squarely faced with this question they tried to evade it or ignored it.

In general, it may be said that evasiveness over the question of the relation of the proletarian revolution to the state—an evasiveness which benefited and fostered opportunism—resulted in the distortion of Marxism and in its complete vulgarization.

To characterize this lamentable process, if only briefly, we shall take the most prominent theoreticians of Marxism: Plekhanov and Kautsky.

1. Plekhanov's Controversy with the Anarchists

Plekhanov wrote a special pamphlet on the relation of anarchism to socialism, entitled *Anarchism and Socialism* , which was published in German in 1894.

In treating this subject, Plekhanov contrived completely to evade the most urgent, burning, and most politically essential issue in the struggle against anarchism, namely, the relation of the revolution to the state, and the question of the state in general! His pamphlet falls into two distinct parts: one of them is historical and literary, and contains valuable material on the history of the ideas of Stirner, Proudhon, and others; the other is philistine, and contains a clumsy dissertation on the theme that an anarchist cannot be distinguished from a bandit.

It is a most amusing combination of subjects and most characteristic of Plekhanov's whole activity on the eve of the revolution and during the revolutionary period in Russia. In fact, in the years 1905 to 1917,

Plekhanov revealed himself as a semi-doctrinaire and semi-philistine who, in politics, trailed in the wake of the bourgeoisie.

We have now seen how, in their controversy with the anarchists, Marx and Engels with the utmost thoroughness explained their views on the relation of revolution to the state. In 1891, in his foreword to Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme* , Engels wrote that "we"—that is, Engels and Marx —"were at that time, hardly two years after the Hague Congress of the [First] International, [30] engaged in the most violent struggle against Bakunin and his anarchists."

The anarchists had tried to claim the Paris Commune as their "own", so to say, as a collaboration of their doctrine; and they completely misunderstood its lessons and Marx's analysis of these lessons. Anarchism has given nothing even approximating true answers to the concrete political questions: Must the old state machine be smashed? And what should be put in its place?

But to speak of "anarchism and socialism" while completely evading the question of the state, and disregarding the whole development of Marxism before and after the Commune, meant inevitably slipping into opportunism. For what opportunism needs most of all is that the two questions just mentioned should not be raised at all. That in itself is a victory for opportunism.

2. Kautsky's Controversy with the Opportunists

Undoubtedly, an immeasurably large number of Kautsky's works have been translated into Russian than into any other language. It is not without reason that some German Social-Democrats say in jest that Kautsky is read more in Russia than in Germany (let us say, in parenthesis, that this jest has a far deeper historical meaning than those who first made it suspect. The Russian workers, by making in 1905 an unusually great and unprecedented demand for the best works of the best Social-Democratic literature and editions of these works in quantities unheard of in other countries, rapidly transplanted, so to speak, the enormous experience of a neighboring, more advanced country to the young soil of our proletarian movement).

Besides his popularization of Marxism, Kautsky is particularly known in our country for his controversy with the opportunists, with Bernstein at their

head. One fact, however, is almost unknown, one which cannot be ignored if we set out to investigate how Kautsky drifted into the morass of unbelievably disgraceful confusion and defense of social-chauvinism during the supreme crisis of 1914-15. This fact is as follows: shortly before he came out against the most prominent representatives of opportunism in France (Millerand and Jaures) and in Germany (Bernstein), Kautsky betrayed very considerable vacillation. The Marxist *Zarya* , [31] which was published in Stuttgart in 1901-02, and advocated revolutionary proletarian views, was forced to enter into controversy with Kautsky and describe as "elastic" the half-hearted, evasive resolution, conciliatory towards the opportunists, that he proposed at the International Socialist Congress in Paris in 1900. [32] Kautsky's letters published in Germany reveal no less hesitancy on his part before he took the field against Bernstein.

Of immeasurably greater significance, however, is the fact that, in his very controversy with the opportunists, in his formulation of the question and his manner of treating it, we can now see, as we study the history of Kautsky's latest betrayal of Marxism, his systematic deviation towards opportunism precisely on the question of the state.

Let us take Kautsky's first important work against opportunism, *Bernstein and the Social-Democratic Programme* . Kautsky refutes Bernstein in detail, but here is a characteristic thing:

Bernstein, in his *Premises of Socialism* , of Herostratean fame, accuses Marxism of "Blanquism" (an accusation repeated thousands of times by the opportunists and liberal bourgeoisie in Russia against the revolutionary Marxists, the Bolsheviks). In this connection Bernstein dwells particularly on Marx's The Civil War in France, and tries, quite unsuccessfully, as we have seen, to identify Marx's views on the lessons of the Commune with those of Proudhon. Bernstein pays particular attention to the conclusion which Marx emphasized in his 1872 preface to the *Communist Manifesto* , namely, that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes" .

This statement "pleased" Bernstein so much that he used it no less than three times in his book, interpreting it in the most distorted, opportunist way.

As we have seen, Marx meant that the working-class must smash, break, shatter (*sprengung* , explosion—the expression used by Engels) the whole state machine. But according to Bernstein it would appear as though Marx in these words warned the working class against excessive revolutionary zeal when seizing power.

A cruder more hideous distortion of Marx's idea cannot be imagined.

How, then, did Kautsky proceed in his most detailed refutation of Bernsteinism?

He refrained from analyzing the utter distortion of Marxism by opportunism on this point. He cited the above-quoted passage from Engels' preface to Marx's *Civil War* and said that according to Marx the working class cannot simply take over the ready-made state machinery, but that, generally speaking, it can take it over—and that was all. Kautsky did not say a word about the fact that Bernstein attributed to Marx the very opposite of Marx's real idea, that since 1852 Marx had formulated the task of the proletarian revolution as being to "smash" the state machine.

The result was that the most essential distinction between Marxism and opportunism on the subject of the tasks of the proletarian revolution was slurred over by Kautsky!

"We can quite safely leave the solution of the problems of the proletarian dictatorship of the future," said Kautsky, writing "against" Bernstein. (p. 172 German edition)

This is not a polemic against Bernstein, but, in essence, a concession to him, a surrender to opportunism; for at present the opportunists ask nothing better than to "quite safely leave to the future" all fundamental questions of the tasks of the proletarian revolution.

From 1852 to 1891, or for 40 years, Marx and Engels taught the proletariat that it must smash the state machine. Yet, in 1899, Kautsky, confronted with the complete betrayal of Marxism by the opportunists on this point, fraudulently substituted for the question whether it is necessary to smash this machine the question for the concrete forms in which it is to be smashed, and then sought refuge behind the "indisputable" (and barren) philistine truth that concrete forms cannot be known in advance!!

A gulf separates Marx and Kautsky over their attitude towards the proletarian party's task of training the working class for revolution.

Let us take the next, more mature, work by Kautsky, which was also largely devoted to a refutation of opportunist errors. It is his pamphlet, *The Social Revolution* . In this pamphlet, the author chose as his special theme the question of "the proletarian revolution" and "the proletarian regime". He gave much that was exceedingly valuable, but he avoided the question of the state. Throughout the pamphlet the author speaks of the winning of state power—and no more; that is, he has chosen a formula which makes a concession to the opportunists, in as much as it admits the possibility of seizing power without destroying the state machine. The very thing which Marx in 1872 declared to be "obsolete" in the programme of the *Communist Manifesto* , is revived by Kautsky in 1902.

A special section in the pamphlet is devoted to the "forms and weapons of the social revolution". Here Kautsky speaks of the mass political strike, of civil war, and of the "instruments of the might of the modern large state, its bureaucracy and the army"; but he does not say a word about what the Commune has already taught the workers. Evidently, it was not without reason that Engels issued a warning, particularly to the German socialists, against "superstitious reverence" for the state.

Kautsky treats the matter as follows: the victorious proletariat "will carry out the democratic programme", and he goes on to formulate its clauses. But he does not say a word about the new material provided in 1871 on the subject of the replacement of bourgeois democracy by proletarian democracy. Kautsky disposes of the question by using such "impressive-sounding" banalities as:

"Still, it goes without saying that we shall not achieve supremacy under the present conditions. Revolution itself presupposes long and deep-going struggles, which, in themselves, will change our present political and social structure."

Undoubtedly, this "goes without saying," just as the fact that horses eat oats of the Volga flows into the Caspian. Only it is a pity that an empty and bombastic phrase about "deep-going" struggles is used to avoid a question

of vital importance to the revolutionary proletariat, namely, what makes its revolution "deep-going" in relation to the state, to democracy, as distinct from previous, non-proletarian revolutions.

By avoiding this question, Kautsky in practice makes a concession to opportunism on this most essential point, although in words he declares stern war against it and stresses the importance of the "idea of revolution" (how much is this "idea" worth when one is afraid to teach the workers the concrete lessons of revolution?), or says, "revolutionary idealism before everything else", or announces that the English workers are now "hardly more than petty bourgeois".

"The most varied form of enterprises—bureaucratic [??], trade unionist, co-operative, private... can exist side by side in socialist society," Kautsky writes. "... There are, for example, enterprises which cannot do without a bureaucratic [??] organization, such as the railways. Here the democratic organization may take the following shape: the workers elect delegates who form a sort of parliament, which establishes the working regulations and supervises the management of the bureaucratic apparatus. The management of other countries may be transferred to the trade unions, and still others may become co-operative enterprises."

This argument is erroneous; it is a step backward compared with the explanations Marx and Engels gave in the seventies, using the lessons of the Commune as an example.

As far as the supposedly necessary "bureaucratic" organization is concerned, there is no difference whatsoever between a railway and any other enterprise in large-scale machine industry, any factory, large shop, or large-scale capitalist agricultural enterprise. The technique of all these enterprises makes absolutely imperative the strictest discipline, the utmost precision on the part of everyone in carrying out his allotted task, for otherwise the whole enterprise may come to a stop, or machinery or the finished product may be damaged. In all these enterprises the workers will, of course, "elect delegates who will form a sort of parliament".

The whole point, however, is that this "sort of parliament" will not be a parliament in the sense of a bourgeois parliamentary institution. The whole point is that this "sort of parliament" will not merely "establish the working

regulations and supervise the management of the bureaucratic apparatus," as Kautsky, whose thinking does not go beyond the bounds of bourgeois parliamentarianism, imagines. In socialist society, the "sort of parliament" consisting of workers' deputies will, of course, "establish the working regulations and supervise the management" of the "apparatus," but this apparatus will not be "bureaucratic." The workers, after winning political power, will smash the old bureaucratic apparatus, shatter it to its very foundations, and raze it to the ground; they will replace it by a new one, consisting of the very same workers and other employees, *against* whose transformation into bureaucratic will at once be taken which were specified in detail by Marx and Engels: (1) not only election, but also recall at any time; (2) pay not to exceed that of a workman; (3) immediate introduction of control by *all* , so that *all* may become "bureaucrats" for a time and that, therefore, *nobody* may be able to become a "bureaucrat".

Kautsky has not reflected at all on Marx's words: "The Commune was a working, not parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time."

Kautsky has not understood at all the difference between bourgeois parliamentarism, which combines democracy (not for the people) with bureaucracy (against the people), and proletarian democracy, which will take immediate steps to cut bureaucracy down to the roots, and which will be able to carry these measures through to the end, to the complete abolition of bureaucracy, to the introduction of complete democracy for the people.

Kautsky here displays the same old "superstitious reverence" for the state, and "superstitious belief" in bureaucracy.

Let us now pass to the last and best of Kautsky's works against the opportunists, his pamphlet *The Road to Power* (which, I believe, has not been published in Russian, for it appeared in 1909, when reaction was at its height in our country). This pamphlet is a big step forward, since it does not deal with the revolutionary programme in general, as the pamphlet of 1899 against Bernstein, or with the tasks of the social revolution irrespective of the time of its occurrence, as the 1902 pamphlet, *The Social Revolution* ; it deals with the concrete conditions which compels us to recognize that the "era of revolutions" is setting in.

The author explicitly points to the aggravation of class antagonisms in general and to imperialism, which plays a particularly important part in this respect. After the "revolutionary period of 1789-1871" in Western Europe, he says, a similar period began in the East in 1905. A world war is approaching with menacing rapidity. "It [the proletariat] can no longer talk of premature revolution." "We have entered a revolutionary period." The "revolutionary era is beginning".

These statements are perfectly clear. This pamphlet of Kautsky's should serve as a measure of comparison of what the German Social-Democrats promised to be before the imperialist war and the depth of degradation to which they, including Kautsky himself, sank when the war broke out. "The present situation," Kautsky wrote in the pamphlet under survey, "is fraught with the danger that we [i.e., the German Social-Democrats] may easily appear to be more 'moderate' than we really are." It turned out that in reality the German Social-Democratic Party was much more moderate and opportunist than it appeared to be!

It is all the more characteristic, therefore, that although Kautsky so explicitly declared that the era of revolution had already begun, in the pamphlet which he himself said was devoted to an analysis of the "political revolution", he again completely avoided the question of the state.

These evasions of the question, these omissions and equivocations, inevitably added up to that complete swing-over to opportunism with which we shall now have to deal.

Kautsky, the German Social-Democrats' spokesman, seems to have declared: I abide by revolutionary views (1899), I recognize, above all, the inevitability of the social revolution of the proletariat (1902), I recognize the advent of a new era of revolutions (1909). Still, I am going back on what Marx said as early as 1852, since the question of the tasks of the proletarian revolution in relation to the state is being raised (1912).

It was in this point-blank form that the question was put in Kautsky's controversy with Pannekoek.

3. Kautsky's Controversy with Pannekoek

In opposing Kautsky, Pannekoek came out as one of the representatives of the "Left radical" trend which included Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Radek, and others. Advocating revolutionary tactics, they were united in the conviction that Kautsky was going over to the "Center", which wavered in an unprincipled manner between Marxism and opportunism. This view was proved perfectly correct by the war, when this "Centrist" (wrongly called Marxist) trend, or Kautskyism, revealed itself in all its repulsive wretchedness.

In an article touching on the question of the state, entitled "Mass Action and Revolution" (*Neue Zeit* , 1912, Vol.XXX, 2), Pannekoek described kautsky's attitude as one of "passive radicalism", as "a theory of inactive expectancy". "Kautsky refuses to see the process of revolution," wrote Pannekoek (p. 616). In presenting the matter in this way, Pannekoek approached the subject which interests us, namely, the tasks of the proletarian revolution in relation to the state.

"The struggle of the proletariat," he wrote, "is not merely a struggle against the bourgeoisie for state power, but a struggle against state power.... The content of this [the proletarian] revolution is the destruction and dissolution [Auflosung] of the instruments of power of the state with the aid of the instruments of power of the proletariat. (p. 544) "The struggle will cease only when, as the result of it, the state organization is completely destroyed. The organization of the majority will then have demonstrated its superiority by destroying the organization of the ruling minority." (p. 548)

The formulation in which Pannekoek presented his ideas suffers from serious defects. But its meaning is clear nonetheless, and it is interesting to note how Kautsky combated it.

"Up to now," he wrote, "the antithesis between the Social-Democrats and the anarchists has been that the former wished to win the state power while the latter wished to destroy it. Pannekoek wants to do both." (p. 724)

Although Pannekoek's exposition lacks precision and concreteness—not to speak of other shortcomings of his article which have no bearing on the present subject—Kautsky seized precisely on the point of principle raised by Pannekoek; and on this fundamental point of principle Kautsky completely abandoned the Marxist position and went over wholly to

opportunism. His definition of the distinction between the Social-Democrats and the anarchists is absolutely wrong; he completely vulgarizes and distorts Marxism.

The distinction between Marxists and the anarchists is this: (1) The former, while aiming at the complete abolition of the state, recognize that this aim can only be achieved after classes have been abolished by the socialist revolution, as the result of the establishment of socialism, which leads to the withering away of the state. The latter want to abolish the state completely overnight, not understanding the conditions under which the state can be abolished. (2) The former recognize that after the proletariat has won political power it must completely destroy the old state machine and replace it by a new one consisting of an organization of the armed workers, after the type of the Commune. The latter, while insisting on the destruction of the state machine, have a very vague idea of what the proletariat will put in its place and how it will use its revolutionary power. The anarchists even deny that the revolutionary proletariat should use the state power, they reject its revolutionary dictatorship. (3) The former demand that the proletariat be trained for revolution by utilizing the present state. The anarchists reject this.

In this controversy, it is not Kautsky but Pannekoek who represents Marxism, for it was Marx who taught that the proletariat cannot simply win state power in the sense that the old state apparatus passes into new hands, but must smash this apparatus, must break it and replace it by a new one.

Kautsky abandons Marxism for the opportunist camp, for this destruction of the state machine, which is utterly unacceptable to the opportunists, completely disappears from his argument, and he leaves a loophole for them in that “conquest” may be interpreted as the simple acquisition of a majority.

To cover up his distortion of Marxism, Kautsky behaves like a doctrinaire: he puts forward a “quotation” from Marx himself. In 1850, Marx wrote that a “resolute centralization of power in the hands of the state authority” was necessary, and Kautsky triumphantly asks: does Pannekoek want to destroy “Centralism”?

This is simply a trick, like Bernstein's identification of the views of Marxism and Proudhonism on the subject of federalism as against centralism.

Kautsky's "quotation" is neither here nor there. Centralism is possible with both the old and the new state machine. If the workers voluntarily unite their armed forces, this will be centralism, but it will be based on the "complete destruction" of the centralized state apparatus—the standing army, the police, and the bureaucracy. Kautsky acts like an outright swindler by evading the perfectly well-known arguments of Marx and Engels on the Commune and plucking out a quotation which has nothing to do with the point at issue.

"Perhaps he [Pannekoek]," Kautsky continues, "wants to abolish the state functions of the officials? But we cannot do without officials even in the party and trade unions, let alone in the state administration. And our programme does not demand the abolition of state officials, but that they be elected by the people.... We are discussing here not the form the administrative apparatus of the 'future state' will assume, but whether our political struggle abolishes [literally dissolves - auflost] the state power *before we have captured it* . [Kautsky's italics] Which ministry with its officials could be abolished?" Then follows an enumeration of the ministeries of education, justice, finance, and war. "No, not one of the present ministries will be removed by our political struggle against the government.... I repeat, in order to prevent misunderstanding: we are not discussing here the form the 'future state' will be given by the victorious Social-Democrats, but how the present state is changed by our opposition." (p. 725)

This is an obvious trick. Pannekoek raised the question of revolution. Both the title of his article and the passages quoted above clearly indicate this. By skipping to the question of "opposition", Kautksy substitutes the opportunist for the revolutionary point of view. What he says means: at present we are an opposition; what we shall be after we have captured power, that we shall see. Revolution has vanished! And that is exactly what the opportunists wanted.

The point at issue is neither opposition nor political struggle in general, but revolution. Revolution consists in the proletariat destroying the

“administrative apparatus” and the whole state machine, replacing it by a new one, made up of the armed workers. Kautsky displays a “superstitious reverence” for “ministries”; but why can they not be replaced, say, by committees of specialists working under sovereign, all-powerful Soviets of Workers and Soldiers’ Deputies?

The point is not at all whether the “ministries” will remain, or whether “committees of specialists” or some other bodies will be set up; that is quite immaterial. The point is whether the old state machine (bound by thousands of threads to the bourgeoisie and permeated through and through with routine and inertia) shall remain, or be destroyed and replaced by a new one. Revolution consists not in the new class commanding, governing with the aid of the old state machine, but in this class smashing this machine and commanding, governing with the aid of a new machine. Kautsky slurs over this basic idea of Marxism, or he does not understand it at all.

His question about officials clearly shows that he does not understand the lessons of the Commune or the teachings of Marx. “We cannot do without officials even in the party and the trade unions....”

We cannot do without officials under capitalism, under the rule of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat is oppressed, the working people are enslaved by capitalism. Under capitalism, democracy is restricted, cramped, curtailed, mutilated by all the conditions of wage slavery, and the poverty and misery of the people. This and this alone is the reason why the functionaries of our political organizations and trade unions are corrupted – or rather tend to be corrupted—by the conditions of capitalism and betray a tendency to become bureaucrats, i.e., privileged persons divorced from the people and standing above the people.

That is the essence of bureaucracy; and until the capitalists have been expropriated and the bourgeoisie overthrown, even proletarian functionaries will inevitably be “bureaucratized” to a certain extent.

According to Kautsky, since elected functionaries will remain under socialism, so will officials, so will the bureaucracy! This is exactly where he is wrong. Marx, referring to the example of the Commune, showed that under socialism functionaries will cease to be “bureaucrats”, to be “officials”, they will cease to be so in proportion as—in addition to the

principle of election of officials—the principle of recall at any time is also introduced, as salaries are reduced to the level of the wages of the average workman, and as parliamentary institutions are replaced by “working bodies, executive and legislative at the same time”.

As a matter of fact, the whole of Kautsky’s argument against Pannekoek, and particularly the former’s wonderful point that we cannot do without officials even in our party and trade union organizations, is merely a repetition of Bernstein’s old “arguments” against Marxism in general. In his renegade book, *The Premises of Socialism* , Bernstein combats the ideas of “primitive” democracy, combats what he calls “doctrinaire democracy": binding mandates, unpaid officials, impotent central representative bodies, etc. to prove that this “primitive” democracy is unsound, Bernstein refers to the experience of the British trade unions, as interpreted by the Webbs. [33] Seventy years of development “in absolute freedom”, he says (p. 137, German edition), convinced the trade unions that primitive democracy was useless, and they replaced it by ordinary democracy, i.e., parliamentarism combined with bureaucracy.

In reality, the trade unions did not develop “in absolute freedom” but in absolute capitalist slavery, under which, it goes without saying, a number of concessions to the prevailing evil, violence, falsehood, exclusion of the poor from the affairs of “higher” administration, “cannot be done without”. Under socialism much of “primitive” democracy will inevitably be revived, since, for the first time in the history of civilized society the mass of the population will rise to taking an independent part, not only in voting and elections, but also in the everyday administration of the state. Under socialism all will govern in turn and will soon become accustomed to no one governing.

Marx’s critical-analytical genius saw in the practical measures of the Commune the turning-point which the opportunists fear and do not want to recognize because of their cowardice, because they do not want to break irrevocably with the bourgeoisie, and which the anarchists do not want to see, either because they are in a hurry or because they do not understand at all the conditions of great social changes. “We must not even think of destroying the old state machine; how can we do without ministries and officials” argues the opportunist, who is completely saturated with

philistinism and who, at bottom, not only does not believe in revolution, in the creative power of revolution, but lives in mortal dread of it (like our Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries).

"We must think only of destroying the old state machine; it is no use probing into the concrete lessons of earlier proletarian revolutions and analyzing what to put in the place of what has been destroyed, and how," argues the anarchist (the best of the anarchist, of course, and not those who, following the Kropotkins and Co., trail behind the bourgeoisie). Consequently, the tactics of the anarchist become the tactics of despair instead of a ruthlessly bold revolutionary effort to solve concrete problems while taking into account the practical conditions of the mass movement.

Marx teaches us to avoid both errors; he teaches us to act with supreme boldness in destroying the entire old state machine, and at the same time he teaches us to put the question concretely: the Commune was able in the space of a few weeks to start building a new, proletarian state machine by introducing such-and-such measures to provide wider democracy and to uproot bureaucracy. Let us learn revolutionary boldness from the Communards; let us see in their practical measures the outline of really urgent and immediately possible measures, and then, following this road, we shall achieve the complete destruction of bureaucracy.

The possibility of this destruction is guaranteed by the fact that socialism will shorten the working day, will raise the people to a new life, will create such conditions for the majority of the population as will enable everybody, without exception, to perform "state functions", and this will lead to the complete withering away of every form of state in general.

"Its object [the object of the mass strike]," Kautsky continues, "cannot be to destroy the state power; its only object can be to make the government compliant on some specific question, or to replace a government hostile to the proletariat by one willing to meet it half-way [*entgegenkommende*]... But never, under no circumstances can it [that is, the proletarian victory over a hostile government] lead to the destruction of the state power; it can lead only to a certain shifting [verschiebung] of the balance of forces within the state power.... The aim of our political struggle remains, as in the past, the conquest of state power by winning a majority in parliament and by

raising parliament to the ranks of master of the government." (p. 726, 727, 732)

This is nothing but the purest and most vulgar opportunism: repudiating revolution in deeds, while accepting it in words. Kautsky's thoughts go no further than a "government... willing to meet the proletariat half-way"—a step backward to philistinism compared with 1847, when the *Communist Manifesto* proclaimed "the organization of the proletariat as the ruling class".

Kautsky will have to achieve his beloved "unity" with the Scheidmanns , Plekhanovs , and Vanderveldes, all of whom agree to fight for a government "willing to meet the proletariat half-way".

We, however, shall break with these traitors to socialism, and we shall fight for the complete destruction of the old state machine, in order that the armed proletariat itself *may become the government* . These are two vastly different things.

Kautsky will have to enjoy the pleasant company of the Legiens and Davids, Plekhanovs , Potresovs, Tseretelis , and Chernovs, who are quite willing to work for the "shifting of the balance of forces within the state power", for "winning a majority in parliament", and "raising parliament to the ranks of master of the government". A most worthy object, which is wholly acceptable to the opportunists and which keeps everything within the bounds of the bourgeois parliamentary republic.

We, however, shall break with the opportunists; and the entire class-conscious proletariat will be with us in the fight—not to "shift the balance of forces", but to overthrow the bourgeoisie, to destroy bourgeois parliamentarism, for a democratic republic after the type of the Commune, or a republic of Soviets of Workers And Soldiers' Deputies, for the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

To the right of Kautsky in international socialism there are trends such as *Socialist Monthly* [34] in Germany (Legien, David, Kolb, and many others, including the Scandinavian Stauning and Branting), Jaures' followers and

Vandervelde in France and Belgium; Turait, Treves, and other Right-wingers of the Italian Party; the Fabians and "Independents" (the Independent labor Party, which, in fact, has always been dependent on the Liberals) in Britain; and the like. All these gentry, who play a tremendous, very often a predominant role in the parliamentary work and the press of their parties, repudiate outright the dictatorship of the proletariat and pursue a policy of undisguised opportunism. In the eyes of these gentry, the "dictatorship" of the proletariat "contradicts" democracy!! There is really no essential distinction between them and the petty-bourgeois democrats.

Taking this circumstance into consideration, we are justified in drawing the conclusion that the Second International, that is, the overwhelming majority of its official representatives, has completely sunk into opportunism. The experience of the Commune has been not only ignored but distorted. Far from inculcating in the workers' minds the idea that the time is nearing when they must act to smash the old state machine, replace it by a new one, and in this way make their political rule the foundation for the socialist reorganization of society, they have actually preached to the masses the very opposite and have depicted the "conquest of power" in a way that has left thousands of loopholes for opportunism.

The distortion and hushing up of the question of the relation of the proletarian revolution to the state could not but play an immense role at a time when states, which possess a military apparatus expanded as a consequence of imperialist rivalry, have become military monsters which are exterminating millions of people in order to settle the issue as to whether Britain or Germany—this or that finance capital—is to rule the world.

Chapter 7: The Experience of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917

The subject indicated in the title of this chapter is so vast that volumes could be written about it. In the present pamphlet we shall have to confine ourselves, naturally, to the most important lessons provided by experience, those bearing directly upon the tasks of the proletariat in the revolution with regard to state power. [Here the manuscript breaks off—Ed.]

PostScript to the First Edition

This pamphlet was written in August and September 1917. I had already drawn up the plan for the next, the seventh chapter, "The Experience of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917". Apart from the title, however, I had no time to write a single line of the chapter; I was "interrupted" by a political crisis—the eve of the October revolution of 1917. Such an "interruption" can only be welcomed; but the writing of the second part of this pamphlet ("The Experience of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917") will probably have to be put off for a long time. It is more pleasant and useful to go through the "experience of revolution" than to write about it.

The Author
November 30, 1917

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[1] Fabians—members of the Fabian Society, a British reformist organization founded in 1884. It grouped mostly bourgeois intellectuals—scholars, writers, politicians—including Sydney and Beatrice Webb, Ramsay MacDonald and Bernard Shaw. The Fabians denied the necessity for the proletarian class struggle and for the socialist revolution. They contended that the transition from capitalism to socialism could only be effected through minor social reforms, that is, gradual changes. Lenin described Fabian ideas as "an extremely opportunist trend". In 1900 the Fabian Society became part of the British Labour Party. "Fabian socialism" is a source of the Labour Party's ideology.

During the First World War the Fabians took a social-chauvinist stand. For Lenin's characterisation of Fabian principles, see Lenin's article "British Pacifism and the British Dislike of Theory"

[2] Frederick Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works,* Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, pp. 326-27). Further below, on pp. 393-95, 395-99 of the volume, Lenin is quoting from the same work by Engels (op. cit., pp. 327-30).

[3] Gentile, or tribal, organization of society-the primitive communal system, or the first socio-economic formation in history. The tribal commune was a community of blood relatives linked by economic and social ties. The tribal system went through the matriarchal and the patriarchal periods. The patriarchate culminated in primitive society becoming a class society and in the rise of the state. Relations of production under the primitive communal system were based on social ownership of the means of production and equalitarian distribution of all products. This corresponded in the main to the low level of the productive forces and to their character at the time.

For the primitive communal system, see Karl Marx, Conspectus of Lewis Morgan's "Ancient Society", and Frederick Engels. The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected* Works, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 204-334).

[4] Frederick Engels, *Anti-Duhring* , Moscow, 1969, p. 332-33. Further down, on p. 404 of this volume, Lenin is quoting from the same work by Engels (op. cit., p. 220).

[5] Thirty Years' War (1618-48), the first European war, resulted from an aggravation of the antagonisms between various alignments of European states, and took the form of a struggle between Protestants and Catholics. It began with a revolt in Bohemia against the tyranny of the Hapsburg monarchy and the onslaught of Catholic reaction. The states which then entered the war formed two camps. The Pope, the Spanish and Austrian Hapsburgs and the Catholic princes of Germany, who rallied to the Catholic Church, opposed the Protestant countries—Bohemia, Denmark, Sweden, the Dutch Republic, and a number of German states that had accepted the Reformation. The Protestant countries were backed by the French kings, enemies of the Hapsburgs. Germany became the chief battlefield and object of military plunder and predatory claims. The war ended in 1648 with the signing of the Peace Treaty of Westphalia, which completed the political dismemberment of Germany.

[6] Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy* , Moscow, 1973, p. 151-52.

[7] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* , Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 137.

[8] Gotha Programme—the programme adopted by the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany in 1875, at the Gotha Congress, which united two German socialist parties, namely, the Eisenachers-led by August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht and influenced by Marx and Engcls-and the Lassalleans . The programme betrayed eclecticism and was opportunist, because the Eisenachers had made concessions to the Lassalleans on major issues and accepted Lassallean formulations. Marx in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* , and Engels in his letter to Bebel of March 18-28, 11475,

devastated the Gotha Programme, which they regarded as a serious step backwards compared with the Eisenach programme of 1869.

[9] Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy* , Moscow, 1973, p. 151.

[10] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* , Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 118-19 and 126.

[11] Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* , Vol. I, Moscow, 1973, p. 477). Further below, on p. 414-15 of this volume, Lenin is quoting from Engels's preface to the third edition of the work (op. cit., p. 396).

[12] *Die Neue Zeit* (New Times)—theoretical journal of the German Social-Democratic Party, published in Stuttgart from 1883 to 1923. It was edited by Karl Kautsky till October 1917 and by Heinrich Cunow in the subsequent period. It published some of Marx's and Engels's writings for the first time. Engels offered advice to its editors and often criticized them for departures from Marxism.

In the second half of the nineties, upon Engels's death, the journal began systematically to publish revisionist articles, including a serial by Bernstein entitled "Problems of Socialism". which initiated a revisionist campaign against Marxism. During the First World War the journal adhered to a Centrist position, and virtually hacked the social-chauvinists.

[13] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence* , Moscow, 1965, p. tb').

[14] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* , Vol. 1, Moscow, 1962, p. 22.

[15] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Correspondence. Moscow, 1965, p. 262-63.

[16] Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France* (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Works, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1973, p. 217-21). Further below, on p. 426, 427, 432-436 of this volume, Lenin is quoting from the same work by Marx (op. cit., p. 222, 220-23).

[17] The Girondists—a political grouping during the French bourgeois revolution of the late eighteenth century, expressed the interests of the moderate bourgeoisie. They wavered between revolution and counter-revolution, and made deals with the monarchy.

[18] Frederick Engels, *The Housing Question* (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Works, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1973, p. 317-18). Further below, on p. 439-40 of this volume, Lenin is quoting from the same work by Engels (op. cit., p. 370, 355).

[19] Lenin is referring to the articles "L'indifferenza in materia politica" by Karl Marx and "Dell' Autorita" by Frederick Engels (Almanacco Republicano per l'anno 1874). Further below, on p. 440-41, 442, 442-43 of this volume, Lenin is quoting from the same articles.

[20] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence* , Moscow, 1965, p. 293-94.

[21] Erfurt Programme—the programme adopted by the German Social-Democratic Party at its Erfurt Congress in October 1891. A step forward compared with the Gotha Programme (1875), it was based on Marx's doctrine of the inevitable downfall of the capitalist mode of production and its replacement by the socialist mode. It stressed the necessity for the working class to wage a political struggle, pointed out the party's role as the leader of that struggle, and so on. But it also made serious

concessions to opportunism. Engels criticized the original draft of the programme in detail in his work A Critique of the Draft Social-Democratic Programme of 1891 It was virtually a critique of the opportunism of the Second International as a whole. But the German Social-Democratic leaders concealed Engels's critique from the rank and file, and disregarded his highly important comments in drawing up the final text of the programme. Lenin considered the fact that the Erfurt Programme said nothing about the dictatorship of the proletariat to be its chief defect and a cowardly concession to opportunism.

[22] The Anti-Socialist Law (Exceptional Law Against the Socialists) was enacted in Germany by the Bismarck government in 1878 to combat the working-class and socialist movement. Under this law, all Social-Democratic Party organizations, all mass organizations of the workers, and the working-class press were banned, socialist literature was confiscated and the Social-Democrats were persecuted, to the point of banishment. These repressive measures did not, however, break the Social-Democratic Party, which readjusted itself to illegal conditions. Der Sozial-Demokrat, the party's Central Organ, was published abroad and party congresses were held at regular intervals (1880, 1883 and 1887). In Germany herself, the Social-Democratic organizations and groups were coming back to life underground, an illegal Central Committee leading their activities. Besides, the Party widely used legal opportunities to establish closer links with the working people, and its influence was growing steadily. At the Reichstag elections in 1890, it polled three times as many votes as in 1878. Marx and Engels did much to help the Social-Democrats. In 1890 popular pressure and the growing working-class movement led to the annulment of the Anti-Socialist Law.

[23] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* , Vol. 2, Moscow, 1973, p. 178-89. Further below, on p. 454, 455, 456-58 of this volume, Lenin is quoting from the same work (op. cit., p. 179-80, 184, 187-89).

[24] The Los-von-Kirche-Bewegung (the "Leave-the-Church" movement), or Kirchenaustrittsbewegung (Movement to Secede from the Church) assumed a vast scale in Germany before the First World War. In January 1914, *Neue Zeit* began with the revisionist Paul Gdhre's article " Kirchenaustrittsbewegung und Sozialdemokratie" ("The Movement to Secede from the Church and Social-Democracy"), to discuss the attitude of the German Social-Democratic Party to the movement. During that discussion prominent German Social-Democratic leaders failed to rebuff Göhre, who affirmed that the party should remain neutral towards the Movement to Secede from the Church and forbid its members to engage in propaganda against religion and the Church on behalf of the party.

Lenin took notice of the discussion while working on material for *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (see present edition, Vol. 39, p. 591).

[25] Lassalleans —supporters of the German petty-bourgeois socialist Ferdinand Lassalle, members of the General Association of German Workers founded at the Congress of Workers' Organisations, held in Leipzig in 1863, to counterbalance the bourgeois progressists who were

trying to gain influence over the working class. The first President of the Association was Lassalle, who formulated its programme and the fundamentals of its tactics. The Association's political programme was declared to be the struggle for universal suffrage, and its economic programme, the struggle for workers' production associations, to be subsidized by the state. In their practical activities, Lassalle and his followers adapted themselves to the hegemony of Prussia and supported the Great Power policy of Bismarck. "Objectively," wrote Engels to Marx on January 27, 1865, "this was a base action and a betrayal of the whole working-class movement to the Prussians." Marx and Engels frequently and sharply criticized the theory, tactics, and organizational principles of the Lassalleans as an opportunist trend in the German working-class movement.

[26] Frederick Engels, "Vorwort zur Broschüre Internationales aus dem 'Volksstaat' (1871-1875)", Marx-Engels, Werke, Bd. 22, Berlin, 1963, S. 417-18.

[27] Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Works, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 26). Further below, on p. 464, 470, 471-73 of this volume, Lenin is quoting from the same work by Marx (op. cit., p. 26, 17, 19).

[28] Reference is to the pupils of a seminary who won notoriety by their extreme ignorance and barbarous customs. They were portrayed by N. G. Pomyalovsky, a Russian author.

[29] When the more important functions of the state are reduced to such accounting and control by the workers themselves, it will cease to be a "political state" and "public functions will lose their political character and become mere administrative functions" (cf. above, Chapter IV, 2, Engels' controversy with the anarchists).

[30] The Hague Congress of the First international sat from September 2-7, 1872. It was attended by 65 delegates, among whom were Marx and Engels. The powers of the General Council and the political activity of the proletariat were among the items on the agenda. The Congress deliberations were marked throughout by a sharp struggle against the Bakuninists. The Congress passed a resolution extending the General Council’s powers. Its resolution “On the Political Activity of the Proletariat” stated that the proletariat should organize a political party of its own to ensure the triumph of the social revolution and that the winning of political power was becoming its great task. The Congress expelled Bakunin and Guillaume from the International as disorganized and founders of a new, anti-proletarian party.

[31] *Zarya* (Dawn)—a Marxist scientific and political journal published in Stuttgart in 1901-02 by the editors of Iskra. Four issues appeared in three installments.

[32] Reference is to the Fifth World Congress of the Second international, which met in Paris from September 23 to 27, 1900. On the fundamental issue, “The Winning of Political Power, and Alliances with Bourgeois Parties”, whose discussion was prompted by A. Millerand becoming a member of the Valdeck-Rousseau counter-revolutionary government, the Congress carried a motion tabled by Kautsky. The resolution said that “the entry of a single Socialist into a bourgeois Ministry cannot be considered as the normal beginning for winning political power: it can never be anything but a

temporary and exceptional makeshift in an emergency situation". Afterwards opportunists frequently referred to this point to justify their collaboration with the bourgeoisie. *Zarya* published (No. 1, April 1901) an article by Plekhanov entitled "A Few Words About the Latest World Socialist Congress in Paris. An Open Letter to the Comrades Who Have Empowered Me", which sharply criticized Kautsky's resolution.

[33] This refers to Sydney and Beatrice Webb, Industrial Democracy.

[34] *Socialist Monthly* (Sozialistische Monatshefte)—the principal journal of the opportunists among the German Social-Democrats, a periodical of international opportunism. It was published in Berlin from 1897 to 1933. During the world imperialist war of 1914-18 it took a social-chauvinist stand.

Wage Labor and Capital

by Karl Marx, 1847

Introduction

This pamphlet first appeared in the form of a series of leading articles in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* , beginning on April 4th, 1849. The text is made up from lectures delivered by Marx before the German Workingmen's Club of Brussels in 1847. The series was never completed. The promise "to be continued," at the end of the editorial in Number 269 of the newspaper, remained unfulfilled in consequence of the precipitous events of that time: the invasion of Hungary by the Russians [Tsarist troops invaded Hungary in 1849 to keep the Austrian Hapsburg dynasty in power], and the uprisings in Dresden, Iserlohn, Elberfeld, the Palatinate, and in Baden [Spontaneous uprisings in Germany in May-July 1849, supporting the Imperial Constitution which were crushed in mid-July], which led to the suppression of the paper on May 19th, 1849. And among the papers left by Marx no manuscript of any continuation of these articles has been found.

"Wage-labor and Capital" has appeared as an independent publication in several editions, the last of which was issued by the Swiss Co-operative Printing Association, in Hottingen-Zurich, in 1884. Hitherto, the several editions have contained the exact wording of the original articles. But since at least 10,000 copies of the present edition are to be circulated as a propaganda tract, the question necessarily forced itself upon me, would Marx himself, under these circumstances, have approved of an unaltered literal reproduction of the original?

Marx, in the '40s, had not yet completed his criticism of political economy. This was not done until toward the end of the fifties. Consequently, such of his writings as were published before the first installment of his *Critique of Political Economy* was finished, deviate in some points from those written

after 1859, and contain expressions and whole sentences which, viewed from the standpoint of his later writings, appear inexact, and even incorrect. Now, it goes without saying that in ordinary editions, intended for the public in general, this earlier standpoint, as a part of the intellectual development of the author, has its place; that the author as well as the public, has an indisputable right to an unaltered reprint of these older writings. In such a case, I would not have dreamed of changing a single word in it. But it is otherwise when the edition is destined almost exclusively for the purpose of propaganda. In such a case, Marx himself would unquestionably have brought the old work, dating from 1849, into harmony with his new point of view, and I feel sure that I am acting in his spirit when I insert in this edition the few changes and additions which are necessary in order to attain this object in all essential point.

Therefore, I say to the reader at once: this pamphlet is not as Marx wrote it in 1849, but approximately as Marx would have written it in 1891. Moreover, so many copies of the original text are in circulation, that these will suffice until I can publish it again unaltered in a complete edition of Marx's works, to appear at some future time.

My alterations center about one point. According to the original reading, the worker sells his *labor* for wages, which he receives from the capitalist; according to the present text, he sells his *labor-power* . And for this change, I must render an explanation: to the workers, in order that they may understand that we are not quibbling or word-juggling, but are dealing here with one of the most important points in the whole range of political economy; to the bourgeois, in order that they may convince themselves how greatly the uneducated workers, who can be easily made to grasp the most difficult economic analyses, excel our supercilious "cultured" folk, for whom such ticklish problems remain insoluble their whole life long.

Classical political economy [1] borrowed from the industrial practice the current notion of the manufacturer, that he buys and pays for the labor of his employees. This conception had been quite serviceable for the business purposes of the manufacturer, his bookkeeping and price calculation. But naively carried over into political economy, it there produced truly wonderful errors and confusions.

Political economy finds it an established fact that the prices of all commodities, among them the price of the commodity which it calls “labor,” continually change; that they rise and fall in consequence of the most diverse circumstances, which often have no connection whatsoever with the production of the commodities themselves, so that prices appear to be determined, as a rule, by pure chance. As soon, therefore, as political economy stepped forth as a science, it was one of its first tasks to search for the law that hid itself behind this chance, which apparently determined the prices of commodities, and which in reality controlled this very chance. Among the prices of commodities, fluctuating and oscillating, now upward, now downward, the fixed central point was searched for around which these fluctuations and oscillations were taking place. In short, starting from the price of commodities, political economy sought for the value of commodities as the regulating law, by means of which all price fluctuations could be explained, and to which they could all be reduced in the last resort.

And so, classical political economy found that the value of a commodity was determined by the labor incorporated in it and requisite to its production. With this explanation, it was satisfied. And we, too, may, for the present, stop at this point. But, to avoid misconceptions, I will remind the reader that today this explanation has become wholly inadequate. Marx was the first to investigate thoroughly into the value-forming quality of labor and to discover that not all labor which is apparently, or even really, necessary to the production of a commodity, imparts under all circumstances to this commodity a magnitude of value corresponding to the quantity of labor used up. If, therefore, we say today in short, with economists like Ricardo, that the value of a commodity is determined by the labor necessary to its production, we always imply the reservations and restrictions made by Marx. Thus much for our present purpose; further information can be found in Marx’s *Critique of Political Economy* , which appeared in 1859, and in the first volume of *Capital* .

But, as soon as the economists applied this determination of value by labor to the commodity “labor", they fell from one contradiction into another. How is the value of “labor” determined? By the necessary labor embodied in it. But how much labor is embodied in the labor of a laborer of a day a week, a month, a year. If labor is the measure of all values, we can express the “value of labor” only in labor. But we know absolutely nothing about

the value of an hour’s labor, if all that we know about it is that it is equal to one hour’s labor. So, thereby, we have not advanced one hair’s breadth nearer our goal; we are constantly turning about in a circle.

Classical economics, therefore, essayed another turn. It said: the value of a commodity is equal to its cost of production. But, what is the cost of production of “labor"? In order to answer this question, the economists are forced to strain logic just a little. Instead of investigating the cost of production of labor itself, which, unfortunately, cannot be ascertained, they now investigate the cost of production of *the laborer* . And this latter can be ascertained. It changes according to time and circumstances, but for a given condition of society, in a given locality, and in a given branch of production, it, too, is given, at least within quite narrow limits. We live today under the regime of capitalist production, under which a large and steadily growing class of the population can live only on the condition that it works for the owners of the means of production—tools, machines, raw materials, and means of subsistence—in return for wages. On the basis of this mode of production, the laborer’s cost of production consists of the sum of the means of subsistence (or their price in money) which on the average are requisite to enable him to work, to maintain in him this capacity for work, and to replace him at his departure, by reason of age, sickness, or death, with another laborer—that is to say, to propagate the working class in required numbers.

Let us assume that the money price of these means of subsistence averages 3 shillings a day. Our laborer gets, therefore, a daily wage of 3 shillings from his employer. For this, the capitalist lets him work, say, 12 hours a day. Our capitalist, moreover, calculates somewhat in the following fashion: Let us assume that our laborer (a machinist) has to make a part of a machine which he finishes in one day. The raw material (iron and brass in the necessary prepared form) costs 20 shillings. The consumption of coal by the steam-engine, the wear-and-tear of this engine itself, of the turning-lathe , and of the other tools with which our laborer works, represent, for one day and one laborer, a value of 1 shilling. The wages for one day are, according to our assumption, 3 shillings. This makes a total of 24 shillings for our piece of a machine.

But, the capitalist calculates that, on an average, he will receive for it a price of 27 shillings from his customers, or 3 shillings over and above his outlay.

Where do the 3 shillings pocketed by the capitalist come from? According to the assertion of classical political economy, commodities are in the long run sold at their values, that is, they are sold at prices which correspond to the necessary quantities of labor contained in them. The average price of our part of a machine—27 shillings—would therefore equal its value, i.e., equal the amount of labor embodied in it. But, of these 27 shillings, 21 shillings were values were values already existing before the machinist began to work; 20 shillings were contained in the raw material, 1 shilling in the fuel consumed during the work and in the machines and tools used in the process and reduced in their efficiency to the value of this amount. There remains 6 shillings, which have been added to the value of the raw material. But, according to the supposition of our economists, themselves, these 6 shillings can arise only from the labor added to the raw material by the laborer. His 12 hours' labor has created, according to this, a new value of 6 shillings. Therefore, the value of his 12 hours' labor would be equivalent to 6 shillings. So we have at last discovered what the "value of labor" is.

"Hold on there!" cries our machinist. "Six shillings? But I have received only 3 shillings! My capitalist swears high and day that the value of my 12 hours' labor is no more than 3 shillings, and if I were to demand 6, he'd laugh at me. What kind of a story is that?"

If before this we got with our value of labor into a vicious circle, we now surely have driven straight into an insoluble contradiction. We searched for the value of labor, and we found more than we can use. For the laborer, the value of the 12 hours' labor is 3 shillings; for the capitalist, it is 6 shillings, of which he pays the workingman 3 shillings as wages, and pockets the remaining 3 shilling himself. According to this, labor has not one but two values, and, moreover, two very different values!

As soon as we reduce the values, now expressed in money, to labor-time, the contradiction becomes even more absurd. By the 12 hours' labor, a new value of 6 shillings is created. Therefore, in 6 hours, the new value created equals 3 shillings—the amount which the laborer receives for 12 hours'

labor. For 12 hours' labor, the workingman receives, as an equivalent, the product of 6 hours' labor. We are, thus, forced to one of two conclusions: either labor has two values, one of which is twice as large as the other, or 12 equals 6! In both cases, we get pure absurdities. Turn and twist as we may, we will not get out of this contradiction as long as we speak of the buying and selling of "labor" and of the "value of labor." And just so it happened to the political economists. The last offshoot of classical political economy—the Ricardian school—was largely wrecked on the insolubility of this contradiction. Classical political economy had run itself into a blind alley. The man who discovered the way out of this blind alley was Karl Marx.

What the economists had considered as the cost of production of "labor" was really the cost of production, not of "labor," but of the living laborer himself. And what this laborer sold to the capitalist was not his labor.

"So soon as his labor really begins," says Marx, "it ceases to belong to him, and therefore can no longer be sold by him."

At the most, he could sell his *future* labor—i.e., assume the obligation of executing a certain piece of work in a certain time. But, in this way, he does not sell labor (which would first have to be performed), but not for a stipulated payment he places his labor-power at the disposal of the capitalist for a certain time (in case of time-wages), or for the performance of a certain task (in case of piece-wages). He hires out or sells his *labor-power* . But this labor-power has grown up with his person and is inseparable from it. Its cost of production, therefore, coincides with his own cost of production; what the economist called the cost of production of labor is really the cost of production of the laborer, and therewith of his labor-power. And, thus, we can also go back from the cost of production of labor-power to the value of labor-power, and determine the quantity of social labor that is required for the production of a labor-power of a given quantity, as Marx has done in the chapter on "The Buying and Selling of labor Power." [*Capital* , Vol.I]

Now what takes place after the worker has sold his labor-power, i.e., after he has placed his labor-power at the disposal of the capitalist for stipulated-wages—whether time-wages or piece-wages? The capitalist takes the laborer into his workshop or factory, where all the articles required for the work can be found—raw materials, auxiliary materials (coal, dyestuffs,

etc.), tools, and machines. Here, the worker begins to work. His daily wages are, as above, 3 shillings, and it makes no difference whether he earns them as day-wages or piece-wages. We again assume that in 12 hours the worker adds by his labor a new value of 6 shillings to the value of the raw materials consumed, which new value the capitalist realizes by the sale of the finished piece of work. Out of this new value, he pays the worker his 3 shillings, and the remaining 3 shillings he keeps for himself. If, now, the laborer creates in 12 hours a value of 6 shillings, in 6 hours he creates a value of 3 shillings. Consequently, after working 6 hours for the capitalist, the laborer has returned to him the equivalent of the 3 shillings received as wages. After 6 hours' work, both are quits , neither one owing a penny to the other.

"Hold on there!" now cries out the capitalist. "I have hired the laborer for a whole day, for 12 hours. But 6 hours are only half-a-day. So work along lively there until the other 6 hours are at an end—only then will we be even." And, in fact, the laborer has to submit to the conditions of the contract upon which he entered of "his own free will", and according to which he bound himself to work 12 whole hours for a product of labor which cost only 6 hours' labor.

Similarly with piece-wages. Let us suppose that in 12 hours our worker makes 12 commodities. Each of these costs a shilling in raw materials and wear-and-tear, and is sold for 2.5 shillings. On our former assumption, the capitalist gives the laborer .25 of a shilling for each piece, which makes a total of 3 shillings for 12 pieces. To earn this, the worker requires 12 hours. The capitalist receives 30 shillings for the 12 pieces; deducting 24 shillings for raw materials and wear-and-tear, there remains 6 shillings, of which he pays 3 shillings in wages and pockets the remaining 3. Just as before! Here, also, the worker labors 6 hours for himself—i.e., to replace his wages (half-an-hour in each of the 12 hours), and 6 hours for the capitalist.

The rock upon which the best economists were stranded, as long as they started out from the value of labor, vanishes as soon as we make our starting-point the value of *labor-power* . Labor-power is, in our present-day capitalist society, a commodity like every other commodity, but yet a very peculiar commodity. It has, namely, the peculiarity of being a value-creating force, the source of value, and, moreover, when properly treated, the source of more value than it possesses itself. In the present state of production,

human labor-power not only produces in a day a greater value than it itself possesses and costs; but with each new scientific discovery, with each new technical invention, there also rises the surplus of its daily production over its daily cost, while as a consequence there diminishes that part of the working-day in which the laborer produces the equivalent of his day's wages, and, on the other hand, lengthens that part of the working-day in which he must present labor gratis to the capitalist.

And this is the economic constitution of our entire modern society: the working class alone produces all values. For value is only another expression for labor, that expression, namely, by which is designated, in our capitalist society of today, the amount of socially necessary labor embodied in a particular commodity. But, these values produced by the workers do not belong to the workers. They belong to the owners of the raw materials, machines, tools, and money, which enable them to buy the labor-power of the working class. Hence, the working class gets back only a part of the entire mass of products produced by it. And, as we have just seen, the other portion, which the capitalist class retains, and which it has to share, at most, only with the landlord class, is increasing with every new discovery and invention, while the share which falls to the working class (per capita) rises but little and very slowly, or not at all, and under certain conditions it may even fall.

But, these discoveries and inventions which supplant one another with ever-increasing speed, this productiveness of human labor which increases from day to day to unheard-of proportions, at last gives rise to a conflict, in which present capitalistic economy must go to ruin. On the one hand, immeasurable wealth and a superfluidity of products with which the buyers cannot cope. On the other hand, the great mass of society proletarianized, transformed into wage-laborers, and thereby disabled from appropriating to themselves that superfluidity of products. The splitting up of society into a small class, immoderately rich, and a large class of wage-laborers devoid of all property, brings it about that this society smothers in its own superfluidity, while the great majority of its members are scarcely, or not at all, protected from extreme want. This condition becomes every day more absurd and more unnecessary. It *must* be gotten rid of; it can be gotten rid of. A new social order is possible, in which the class differences of today will have disappeared, and in which—perhaps after a short transition

period, which, though somewhat deficient in other respects, will in any case be very useful morally—there will be the means of life, of the enjoyment of life, and of the development and activity of all bodily and mental faculties, through the systematic use and further development of the enormous productive powers of society, which exists with us even now, with equal obligation upon all to work. And that the workers are growing ever more determined to achieve this new social order will be proven on both sides of the ocean on this dawning May Day, and on Sunday, May 3rd. [Engels is referring to the May Day celebrations of 1891]

Friederich Engels
London, April 30, 1891.

Chapter 1: Preliminary

From various quarters we have been reproached for neglecting to portray the economic conditions which form the material basis of the present struggles between classes and nations. With set purpose we have hitherto touched upon these conditions only when they forced themselves upon the surface of the political conflicts.

It was necessary, beyond everything else, to follow the development of the class struggle in the history of our own day, and to prove empirically, by the actual and daily newly created historical material, that with the subjugation of the working class, accomplished in the days of February and March, 1848, the opponents of that class—the bourgeois republicans in France, and the bourgeois and peasant classes who were fighting feudal absolutism throughout the whole continent of Europe—were simultaneously conquered; that the victory of the "moderate republic" in France sounded at the same time the fall of the nations which had responded to the February revolution with heroic wars of independence; and finally that, by the victory over the revolutionary workingmen, Europe fell back into its old double slavery, into the English-Russian slavery. The June conflict in Paris, the fall of Vienna, the tragi-comedy in Berlin in November 1848, the desperate efforts of Poland, Italy, and Hungary, the starvation of Ireland into submission—these were the chief events in which the European class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the working class was summed up, and from which we proved that every revolutionary uprising, however remote from the class struggle its object might appear, must of necessity fail until the revolutionary working class shall have conquered;—that every social reform must remain a Utopia until the proletarian revolution and the feudalistic counter-revolution have been pitted against each other in a world-wide war. In our presentation, as in reality, Belgium and Switzerland were tragicomic caricaturish genre pictures in the great historic tableau; the one the model State of the bourgeois monarchy, the other the model State of the bourgeois republic; both of them, States that flatter themselves to be just as free from the class struggle as from the European revolution.

But now, after our readers have seen the class struggle of the year 1848 develop into colossal political proportions, it is time to examine more closely the economic conditions themselves upon which is founded the existence of the capitalist class and its class rule, as well as the slavery of the workers.

We shall present the subject in three great divisions:

The Relation of Wage-labor to Capital, the Slavery of the Worker, the Rule of the Capitalist.

The Inevitable Ruin of the Middle Classes [petty-bourgeois] and the so-called Commons [peasants] under the present system.

The Commercial Subjugation and Exploitation of the Bourgeois classes of the various European nations by the Despot of the World Market—England.

We shall seek to portray this as simply and popularly as possible, and shall not presuppose a knowledge of even the most elementary notions of political economy. We wish to be understood by the workers. And, moreover, there prevails in Germany the most remarkable ignorance and confusion of ideas in regard to the simplest economic relations, from the patented defenders of existing conditions, down to the socialist wonder-workers and the unrecognized political geniuses, in which divided Germany is even richer than in duodecimo princelings. We therefore proceed to the consideration of the first problem.

Chapter 2: What are Wages?

If several workmen were to be asked: "How much wages do you get?", one would reply, "I get two shillings a day", and so on. According to the different branches of industry in which they are employed, they would mention different sums of money that they receive from their respective employers for the completion of a certain task; for example, for weaving a yard of linen, or for setting a page of type. Despite the variety of their statements, they would all agree upon one point: that wages are the amount of money which the capitalist pays for a certain period of work or for a certain amount of work.

Consequently, it appears that the capitalist buys their labor with money, and that for money they sell him their labor. But this is merely an illusion. What they actually sell to the capitalist for money is their labor-power. This labor-power the capitalist buys for a day, a week, a month, etc. And after he has bought it, he uses it up by letting the worker labor during the stipulated time. With the same amount of money with which the capitalist has bought their labor-power (for example, with two shillings) he could have bought a certain amount of sugar or of any other commodity. The two shillings with which he bought 20 pounds of sugar is the price of the 20 pounds of sugar. The two shillings with which he bought 12 hours' use of labor-power, is the price of 12 hours' labor. Labor-power, then, is a commodity, no more, no less so than is the sugar. The first is measured by the clock, the other by the scales.

Their commodity, labor-power, the workers exchange for the commodity of the capitalist, for money, and, moreover, this exchange takes place at a certain ratio. So much money for so long a use of labor-power. For 12 hours' weaving, two shillings. And these two shillings, do they not represent all the other commodities which I can buy for two shillings? Therefore, actually, the worker has exchanged his commodity, labor-power, for commodities of all kinds, and, moreover, at a certain ratio. By giving him two shillings, the capitalist has given him so much meat, so much clothing, so much wood, light, etc., in exchange for his day's work. The two shillings

therefore express the relation in which labor-power is exchanged for other commodities, the exchange-value of labor-power.

The exchange value of a commodity estimated in money is called its price. Wages therefore are only a special name for the price of labor-power, and are usually called the price of labor; it is the special name for the price of this peculiar commodity, which has no other repository than human flesh and blood.

Let us take any worker; for example, a weaver. The capitalist supplies him with the loom and yarn. The weaver applies himself to work, and the yarn is turned into cloth. The capitalist takes possession of the cloth and sells it for 20 shillings, for example. Now are the wages of the weaver a share of the cloth, of the 20 shillings, of the product of the work? By no means. Long before the cloth is sold, perhaps long before it is fully woven, the weaver has received his wages. The capitalist, then, does not pay his wages out of the money which he will obtain from the cloth, but out of money already on hand. Just as little as loom and yarn are the product of the weaver to whom they are supplied by the employer, just so little are the commodities which he receives in exchange for his commodity—labor-power—his product. It is possible that the employer found no purchasers at all for the cloth. It is possible that he did not get even the amount of the wages by its sale. It is possible that he sells it very profitably in proportion to the weaver's wages. But all that does not concern the weaver. With a part of his existing wealth, of his capital, the capitalist buys the labor-power of the weaver in exactly the same manner as, with another part of his wealth, he has bought the raw material—the yarn—and the instrument of labor—the loom. After he has made these purchases, and among them belongs the labor-power necessary to the production of the cloth he produces only with raw materials and instruments of labor belonging to him. For our good weaver, too, is one of the instruments of labor, and being in this respect on a par with the loom, he has no more share in the product (the cloth), or in the price of the product, than the loom itself has.

Wages, therefore, are not a share of the worker in the commodities produced by himself. Wages are that part of already existing commodities with which the capitalist buys a certain amount of productive labor-power.

Consequently, labor-power is a commodity which its possessor, the wage-worker, sells to the capitalist. Why does he sell it? It is in order to live.

But the putting of labor-power into action—i.e., the work—is the active expression of the laborer's own life. And this life activity he sells to another person in order to secure the necessary means of life. His life-activity, therefore, is but a means of securing his own existence. He works that he may keep alive. He does not count the labor itself as a part of his life; it is rather a sacrifice of his life. It is a commodity that he has auctioned off to another. The product of his activity, therefore, is not the aim of his activity. What he produces for himself is not the silk that he weaves, not the gold that he draws up the mining shaft, not the palace that he builds. What he produces for himself is wages; and the silk, the gold, and the palace are resolved for him into a certain quantity of necessaries of life, perhaps into a cotton jacket, into copper coins, and into a basement dwelling. And the laborer who for 12 hours long, weaves, spins, bores, turns, builds, shovels, breaks stone, carries hods, and so on—is this 12 hours' weaving, spinning, boring, turning, building, shoveling, stone-breaking, regarded by him as a manifestation of life, as life? Quite the contrary. Life for him begins where this activity ceases, at the table, at the tavern, in bed. The 12 hours' work, on the other hand, has no meaning for him as weaving, spinning, boring, and so on, but only as earnings, which enable him to sit down at a table, to take his seat in the tavern, and to lie down in a bed. If the silk-worm's object in spinning were to prolong its existence as a caterpillar, it would be a perfect example of a wage-worker.

Labor-power was not always a commodity (merchandise). Labor was not always wage-labor, i.e., free labor. The slave did not sell his labor-power to the slave owner, any more than the ox sells his labor to the farmer. The slave, together with his labor-power, was sold to his owner once for all. He is a commodity that can pass from the hand of one owner to that of another. He himself is a commodity, but his labor-power is not his commodity. The serf sells only a portion of his labor-power. It is not he who receives wages from the owner of the land; it is rather the owner of the land who receives a tribute from him. The serf belongs to the soil, and to the lord of the soil he brings its fruit. The free laborer, on the other hand, sells his very self, and that by fractions. He auctions off eight, 10, 12, 15 hours of his life, one day like the next, to the highest bidder, to the owner of raw materials, tools, and

the means of life—i.e., to the capitalist. The laborer belongs neither to an owner nor to the soil, but eight, 10, 12, 15 hours of his daily life belong to whomever buys them. The worker leaves the capitalist, to whom he has sold himself, as often as he chooses, and the capitalist discharges him as often as he sees fit, as soon as he no longer gets any use, or not the required use, out of him. But the worker, whose only source of income is the sale of his labor-power, cannot leave the whole class of buyers, i.e., the capitalist class, unless he gives up his own existence. He does not belong to this or that capitalist, but to the capitalist class; and it is for him to find his man—i.e., to find a buyer in this capitalist class.

Before entering more closely upon the relation of capital to wage-labor, we shall briefly present the most general conditions which come into consideration in the determination of wages.

Wages, as we have seen, are the price of a certain commodity, labor-power. Wages, therefore, are determined by the same laws that determine the price of every other commodity. The question then is, How is the price of a commodity determined?

Chapter 3: By What is the Price of a Commodity Determined?

By the competition between buyers and sellers, by the relation of the demand to the supply, of the call to the offer. The competition by which the price of a commodity is determined is threefold.

The same commodity is offered for sale by various sellers. Whoever sells commodities of the same quality most cheaply, is sure to drive the other sellers from the field and to secure the greatest market for himself. The sellers therefore fight among themselves for the sales, for the market. Each one of them wishes to sell, and to sell as much as possible, and if possible to sell alone, to the exclusion of all other sellers. Each one sells cheaper than the other. Thus there takes place a competition among the sellers which forces down the price of the commodities offered by them.

But there is also a competition among the buyers; this upon its side causes the price of the proffered commodities to rise.

Finally, there is competition between the buyers and the sellers: these wish to purchase as cheaply as possible, those to sell as dearly as possible. The result of this competition between buyers and sellers will depend upon the relations between the two above-mentioned camps of competitors—i.e., upon whether the competition in the army of sellers is stronger. Industry leads two great armies into the field against each other, and each of these again is engaged in a battle among its own troops in its own ranks. The army among whose troops there is less fighting, carries off the victory over the opposing host.

Let us suppose that there are 100 bales of cotton in the market and at the same time purchasers for 1,000 bales of cotton. In this case, the demand is 10 times greater than the supply. Competition among the buyers, then, will be very strong; each of them tries to get hold of one bale, if possible, of the whole 100 bales. This example is no arbitrary supposition. In the history of commerce we have experienced periods of scarcity of cotton, when some capitalists united together and sought to buy up not 100 bales, but the whole

cotton supply of the world. In the given case, then, one buyer seeks to drive the others from the field by offering a relatively higher price for the bales of cotton. The cotton sellers, who perceive the troops of the enemy in the most violent contention among themselves, and who therefore are fully assured of the sale of their whole 100 bales, will beware of pulling one another's hair in order to force down the price of cotton at the very moment in which their opponents race with one another to screw it up high. So, all of a sudden, peace reigns in the army of sellers. They stand opposed to the buyers like one man, fold their arms in philosophic contentment and their claims would find no limit if the offers of even the most wealthy of buyers have a definite limit.

If, then, the supply of a commodity is less than the demand for it, competition among the sellers is very slight, or there may be none at all among them. In the same proportion in which this competition decreases, the competition among the buyers increases. Result: a more or less considerable rise in the prices of commodities.
It is well known that the opposite case, with the opposite result, happens more frequently. Great excess of supply over demand; desperate competition among the sellers, and a lack of buyers; forced sales of commodities at ridiculously low prices.

But what is a rise, and what a fall of prices? What is a high and what a low price? A grain of sand is high when examined through a microscope, and a tower is low when compared with a mountain. And if the price is determined by the relation of supply and demand, by what is the relation of supply and demand determined?

Let us turn to the first worthy citizen we meet. He will not hesitate one moment, but, like Alexander the Great, will cut this metaphysical knot with his multiplication table. He will say to us: "If the production of the commodities which I sell has cost me 100 pounds, and out of the sale of these goods I make 110 pounds—within the year, you understand—that's an honest, sound, reasonable profit. But if in the exchange I receive 120 or 130 pounds, that's a higher profit; and if I should get as much as 200 pounds, that would be an extraordinary, and enormous profit." What is it, then, that serves this citizen as the standard of his profit? The cost of the production of his commodities. If in exchange for these goods he receives a quantity of

other goods whose production has cost less, he has lost. If he receives in exchange for his goods a quantity of other goods whose production has cost more, he has gained. And he reckons the falling or rising of the profit according to the degree at which the exchange value of his goods stands, whether above or below his zero—the cost of production.

We have seen how the changing relation of supply and demand now causes a rise, now a fall of prices; now high, now low prices. If the price of a commodity rises considerably owing to a failing supply or a disproportionately growing demand, then the price of some other commodity must have fallen in proportion; for of course the price of a commodity only expresses in money the proportion in which other commodities will be given in exchange for it. If, for example, the price of a yard of silk rises from two to three shillings, the price of silver has fallen in relation to the silk, and in the same way the prices of all other commodities whose prices have remained stationary have fallen in relation to the price of silk. A large quantity of them must be given in exchange in order to obtain the same amount of silk. Now, what will be the consequence of a rise in the price of a particular commodity? A mass of capital will be thrown into the prosperous branch of industry, and this immigration of capital into the provinces of the favored industry will continue until it yields no more than the customary profits, or, rather until the price of its products, owning to overproduction, sinks below the cost of production.

Conversely: if the price of a commodity falls below its cost of production, then capital will be withdrawn from the production of this commodity. Except in the case of a branch of industry which has become obsolete and is therefore doomed to disappear, the production of such a commodity (that is, its supply), will, owning to this flight of capital, continue to decrease until it corresponds to the demand, and the price of the commodity rises again to the level of its cost of production; or, rather, until the supply has fallen below the demand and its price has risen above its cost of production, for the current price of a commodity is always either above or below its cost of production.

We see how capital continually emigrates out of the province of one industry and immigrates into that of another. The high price produces an excessive immigration, and the low price an excessive emigration.

We could show, from another point of view, how not only the supply, but also the demand, is determined by the cost of production. But this would lead us too far away from our subject.

We have just seen how the fluctuation of supply and demand always bring the price of a commodity back to its cost of production. The actual price of a commodity, indeed, stands always above or below the cost of production; but the rise and fall reciprocally balance each other, so that, within a certain period of time, if the ebbs and flows of the industry are reckoned up together, the commodities will be exchanged for one another in accordance with their cost of production. Their price is thus determined by their cost of production.

The determination of price by the cost of production is not to be understood in the sense of the bourgeois economists. The economists say that the average price of commodities equals the cost of production: that is the law. The anarchic movement, in which the rise is compensated for by a fall and the fall by a rise, they regard as an accident. We might just as well consider the fluctuations as the law, and the determination of the price by cost of production as an accident—as is, in fact, done by certain other economists. But it is precisely these fluctuations which, viewed more closely, carry the most frightful devastation in their train, and, like an earthquake, cause bourgeois society to shake to its very foundations—it is precisely these fluctuations that force the price to conform to the cost of production. In the totality of this disorderly movement is to be found, its order. In the total course of this industrial anarchy, in this circular movement, competition balances, as it were, the one extravagance by the other.

We thus see that the price of a commodity is indeed determined by its cost of production, but in such a manner that the periods in which the price of these commodities rises above the costs of production are balanced by the periods in which it sinks below the cost of production, and vice versa. Of course this does not hold good for a single given product of an industry, but only for that branch of industry. So also it does not hold good for an individual manufacturer, but only for the whole class of manufacturers.

The determination of price by cost of production is tantamount to the determination of price by the labor-time requisite to the production of a commodity, for the cost of production consists, first of raw materials and

wear and tear of tools, etc., i.e., of industrial products whose production has cost a certain number of work-days, which therefore represent a certain amount of labor-time, and, secondly, of direct labor, which is also measured by its duration.

Chapter 4: By What are Wages Determined?

Now, the same general laws which regulate the price of commodities in general, naturally regulate wages, or the price of labor-power. Wages will now rise, and now fall, according to the relation of supply and demand, according to how competition shapes itself between the buyers of labor-power, the capitalists, and the sellers of labor-power, the workers. The fluctuations of wages correspond to the fluctuation in the price of commodities in general. But within the limits of these fluctuations the price of labor-power will be determined by the cost of production, by the labor-time necessary for production of this commodity: labor-power.

What, then, is the cost of production of labor-power?

It is the cost required for the maintenance of the laborer as a laborer, and for his education and training as a laborer.

Therefore, the shorter the time required for training up to a particular sort of work, the smaller is the cost of production of the worker, the lower is the price of his labor-power, his wages. In those branches of industry in which hardly any period of apprenticeship is necessary and the mere bodily existence of the worker is sufficient, the cost of his production is limited almost exclusively to the commodities necessary for keeping him in working condition. The price of his work will therefore be determined by the price of the necessary means of subsistence.

Here, however, there enters another consideration. The manufacturer who calculates his cost of production and, in accordance with it, the price of the product, takes into account the wear and tear of the instruments of labor. If a machine costs him, for example, 1,000 shillings, and this machine is used up in 10 years, he adds 100 shillings annually to the price of the commodities, in order to be able after 10 years to replace the worn-out machine with a new one. In the same manner, the cost of production of simple labor-power must include the cost of propagation, by means of which the race of workers is enabled to multiply itself, and to replace worn-

out workers with new ones. The wear and tear of the worker, therefore, is calculated in the same manner as the wear and tear of the machine.

Thus, the cost of production of simple labor-power amounts to the cost of the existence and propagation of the worker. The price of this cost of existence and propagation constitutes wages. The wages thus determined are called the minimum of wages. This minimum wage, like the determination of the price of commodities in general by cost of production, does not hold good for the single individual, but only for the race. Individual workers, indeed, millions of workers, do not receive enough to be able to exist and to propagate themselves; but the wages of the whole working class adjust themselves, within the limits of their fluctuations, to this minimum.

Now that we have come to an understanding in regard to the most general laws which govern wages, as well as the price of every other commodity, we can examine our subject more particularly.

Chapter 5: The Nature and Growth of Capital

Capital consists of raw materials, instruments of labor, and means of subsistence of all kinds, which are employed in producing new raw materials, new instruments, and new means of subsistence. All these components of capital are created by labor, products of labor, accumulated labor. Accumulated labor that serves as a means to new production is capital.

So say the economists.

What is a Negro slave? A man of the black race. The one explanation is worthy of the other.

A Negro is a Negro. Only under certain conditions does he become a slave. A cotton-spinning machine is a machine for spinning cotton. Only under certain conditions does it become capital. Torn away from these conditions, it is as little capital as gold is itself money, or sugar is the price of sugar.

In the process of production, human beings work not only upon nature, but also upon one another. They produce only by working together in a specified manner and reciprocally exchanging their activities. In order to produce, they enter into definite connections and relations to one another, and only within these social connections and relations does their influence upon nature operate—i.e., does production take place.

These social relations between the producers, and the conditions under which they exchange their activities and share in the total act of production, will naturally vary according to the character of the means of production. With the discovery of a new instrument of warfare, the firearm, the whole internal organization of the army was necessarily altered, the relations within which individuals compose an army and can work as an army were transformed, and the relation of different armies to another was likewise changed.

We thus see that the social relations within which individuals produce, the social relations of production, are altered, transformed, with the change and

development of the material means of production, of the forces of production. The relations of production in their totality constitute what is called the social relations, society, and, moreover, a society at a definite stage of historical development, a society with peculiar, distinctive characteristics. Ancient society, feudal society, bourgeois (or capitalist) society, are such totalities of relations of production, each of which denotes a particular stage of development in the history of mankind.

Capital also is a social relation of production. It is a bourgeois relation of production, a relation of production of bourgeois society. The means of subsistence, the instruments of labor, the raw materials, of which capital consists—have they not been produced and accumulated under given social conditions, within definite special relations? Are they not employed for new production, under given special conditions, within definite social relations? And does not just the definite social character stamp the products which serve for new production as capital?

Capital consists not only of means of subsistence, instruments of labor, and raw materials, not only as material products; it consists just as much of exchange values. All products of which it consists are commodities. Capital, consequently, is not only a sum of material products, it is a sum of commodities, of exchange values, of social magnitudes. Capital remains the same whether we put cotton in the place of wool, rice in the place of wheat, steamships in the place of railroads, provided only that the cotton, the rice, the steamships—the body of capital—have the same exchange value, the same price, as the wool, the wheat, the railroads, in which it was previously embodied. The bodily form of capital may transform itself continually, while capital does not suffer the least alteration.

But though every capital is a sum of commodities—i.e., of exchange values —it does not follow that every sum of commodities, of exchange values, is capital.

Every sum of exchange values is an exchange value. Each particular exchange value is a sum of exchange values. For example: a house worth 1,000 pounds is an exchange value of 1,000 pounds: a piece of paper worth one penny is a sum of exchange values of 100 1/100ths of a penny. Products which are exchangeable for others are commodities. The definite proportion in which they are exchangeable forms their exchange value, or, expressed in

money, their price. The quantity of these products can have no effect on their character as commodities, as representing an exchange value, as having a certain price. Whether a tree be large or small, it remains a tree. Whether we exchange iron in pennyweights or in hundredweights, for other products, does this alter its character: its being a commodity, or exchange value? According to the quantity, it is a commodity of greater or of lesser value, of higher or of lower price.

How then does a sum of commodities, of exchange values, become capital?

Thereby, as an independent social power—i.e., as the power of a part of society—it preserves itself and multiplies by exchange with direct, living labor-power.

The existence of a class which possesses nothing but the ability to work is a necessary presupposition of capital.

It is only the dominion of past, accumulated, materialized labor over immediate living labor that stamps the accumulated labor with the character of capital.

Capital does not consist in the fact that accumulated labor serves living labor as a means for new production. It consists in the fact that living labor serves accumulated labor as the means of preserving and multiplying its exchange value.

Chapter 6: Relation of Wage-Labor to Capital

What is it that takes place in the exchange between the capitalist and the wage-laborer?

The laborer receives means of subsistence in exchange for his labor-power; the capitalist receives, in exchange for his means of subsistence, labor, the productive activity of the laborer, the creative force by which the worker not only replaces what he consumes, but also gives to the accumulated labor a greater value than it previously possessed. The laborer gets from the capitalist a portion of the existing means of subsistence. For what purpose do these means of subsistence serve him? For immediate consumption. But as soon as I consume means of subsistence, they are irrevocably lost to me, unless I employ the time during which these means sustain my life in producing new means of subsistence, in creating by my labor new values in place of the values lost in consumption. But it is just this noble reproductive power that the laborer surrenders to the capitalist in exchange for means of subsistence received. Consequently, he has lost it for himself.

Let us take an example. For one shilling a laborer works all day long in the fields of a farmer, to whom he thus secures a return of two shillings. The farmer not only receives the replaced value which he has given to the day laborer, he has doubled it. Therefore, he has consumed the one shilling that he gave to the day laborer in a fruitful, productive manner. For the one shilling he has bought the labor-power of the day-laborer, which creates products of the soil of twice the value, and out of one shilling makes two. The day-laborer, on the contrary, receives in the place of his productive force, whose results he has just surrendered to the farmer, one shilling, which he exchanges for means of subsistence, which he consumes more or less quickly. The one shilling has therefore been consumed in a double manner—reproductively for the capitalist, for it has been exchanged for labor-power, which brought forth two shillings; unproductively for the worker, for it has been exchanged for means of subsistence which are lost forever, and whose value he can obtain again only by repeating the same exchange with the farmer. Capital therefore presupposes wage-labor; wage-

labor presupposes capital. They condition each other; each brings the other into existence.

Does a worker in a cotton factory produce only cotton? No. He produces capital. He produces values which serve anew to command his work and to create by means of it new values.

Capital can multiply itself only by exchanging itself for labor-power, by calling wage-labor into life. The labor-power of the wage-laborer can exchange itself for capital only by increasing capital, by strengthening that very power whose slave it is. Increase of capital is, therefore, increase of the proletariat, i.e., of the working class.

And so, the bourgeoisie and its economists maintain that the interest of the capitalist and of the laborer is the same. And in fact, so they are! The worker perishes if capital does not keep him busy. Capital perishes if it does not exploit labor-power, which, in order to exploit, it must buy. The more quickly the capital destined for production—the productive capital—increases, the more prosperous industry is, the more the bourgeoisie enriches itself, the better business gets, so many more workers does the capitalist need, so much the dearer the worker sells himself. The fastest possible growth of productive capital is, therefore, the indispensable condition for a tolerable life to the laborer.

But what is growth of productive capital? Growth of the power of accumulated labor over living labor; growth of the rule of the bourgeoisie over the working class. When wage-labor produces the alien wealth dominating it, the power hostile to it, capital, there flow back to it its means of employment—i.e., its means of subsistence, under the condition that it again become a part of capital, that is become again the lever whereby capital is to be forced into an accelerated expansive movement.

To say that the interests of capital and the interests of the workers are identical, signifies only this: that capital and wage-labor are two sides of one and the same relation. The one conditions the other in the same way that the usurer and the borrower condition each other.

As long as the wage-laborer remains a wage-laborer, his lot is dependent upon capital. That is what the boasted community of interests between

worker and capitalist amounts to.

If capital grows, the mass of wage-labor grows, the number of wage-workers increases; in a word, the sway of capital extends over a greater mass of individuals.

Let us suppose the most favorable case: if productive capital grows, the demand for labor grows. It therefore increases the price of labor-power, wages.

A house may be large or small; as long as the neighboring houses are likewise small, it satisfies all social requirements for a residence. But let there arise next to the little house a palace, and the little house shrinks to a hut. The little house now makes it clear that its inmate has no social position at all to maintain, or but a very insignificant one; and however high it may shoot up in the course of civilization, if the neighboring palace rises in equal or even in greater measure, the occupant of the relatively little house will always find himself more uncomfortable, more dissatisfied, more cramped within his four walls.

An appreciable rise in wages presupposes a rapid growth of productive capital. Rapid growth of productive capital calls forth just as rapid a growth of wealth, of luxury, of social needs and social pleasures. Therefore, although the pleasures of the laborer have increased, the social gratification which they afford has fallen in comparison with the increased pleasures of the capitalist, which are inaccessible to the worker, in comparison with the stage of development of society in general. Our wants and pleasures have their origin in society; we therefore measure them in relation to society; we do not measure them in relation to the objects which serve for their gratification. Since they are of a social nature, they are of a relative nature.

But wages are not at all determined merely by the sum of commodities for which they may be exchanged. Other factors enter into the problem. What the workers directly receive for their labor-power is a certain sum of money. Are wages determined merely by this money price?

In the 16th century, the gold and silver circulation in Europe increased in consequence of the discovery of richer and more easily worked mines in America. The value of gold and silver, therefore, fell in relation to other

commodities. The workers received the same amount of coined silver for their labor-power as before. The money price of their work remained the same, and yet their wages had fallen, for in exchange for the same amount of silver they obtained a smaller amount of other commodities. This was one of the circumstances which furthered the growth of capital, the rise of the bourgeoisie, in the 18th century.

Let us take another case. In the winter of 1847, in consequence of bad harvest, the most indispensable means of subsistence—grains, meat, butter, cheese, etc.—rose greatly in price. Let us suppose that the workers still received the same sum of money for their labor-power as before. Did their wages not fall? To be sure. For the same money they received in exchange less bread, meat, etc. Their wages fell, not because the value of silver was less, but because the value of the means of subsistence had increased.

Finally, let us suppose that the money price of labor-power remained the same, while all agricultural and manufactured commodities had fallen in price because of the employment of new machines, of favorable seasons, etc. For the same money the workers could now buy more commodities of all kinds. Their wages have therefore risen, just because their money value has not changed.

The money price of labor-power, the nominal wages, do not therefore coincide with the actual or real wages—i.e., with the amount of commodities which are actually given in exchange for the wages. If we then speak of a rise or fall of wages, we have to keep in mind not only the money price of labor-power, the nominal wages, but also the real wages.

But neither the nominal wages—i.e., the amount of money for which the laborer sells himself to the capitalist—nor the real wages—i.e., the amount of commodities which he can buy for this money—exhausts the relations which are comprehended in the term wages.

Wages are determined above all by their relations to the gain, the profit, of the capitalist. In other words, wages are a proportionate, relative quantity.

Real wages express the price of labor-power in relation to the price of commodities; relative wages, on the other hand, express the share of immediate labor in the value newly created by it, in relation to the share of it which falls to accumulated labor, to capital.

Chapter 7: The General Law that Determines the Rise and Fall of Wages and Profits

We have said: "Wages are not a share of the worker in the commodities produced by him. Wages are that part of already existing commodities with which the capitalist buys a certain amount of productive labor-power." But the capitalist must replace these wages out of the price for which he sells the product made by the worker; he must so replace it that, as a rule, there remains to him a surplus above the cost of production expended by him, that is, he must get a profit.

The selling price of the commodities produced by the worker is divided, from the point of view of the capitalist, into three parts:

First, the replacement of the price of the raw materials advanced by him, in addition to the replacement of the wear and tear of the tools, machines, and other instruments of labor likewise advanced by him;

Second, the replacement of the wages advanced; and

Third, the surplus leftover—i.e., the profit of the capitalist.

While the first part merely replaces previously existing values, it is evident that the replacement of the wages and the surplus (the profit of capital) are as a whole taken out of the new value, which is produced by the labor of the worker and added to the raw materials. And in this sense we can view wages as well as profit, for the purpose of comparing them with each other, as shares in the product of the worker.

Real wages may remain the same, they may even rise, nevertheless the relative wages may fall. Let us suppose, for instance, that all means of subsistence have fallen 2/3rds in price, while the day's wages have fallen but 1/3rd—for example, from three to two shillings. Although the worker can now get a greater amount of commodities with these two shillings than he formerly did with three shillings, yet his wages have decreased in proportion to the gain of the capitalist. The profit of the capitalist—the

manufacturer's for instance—has increased one shilling, which means that for a smaller amount of exchange values, which he pays to the worker, the latter must produce a greater amount of exchange values than before. The share of capitals in proportion to the share of labor has risen. The distribution of social wealth between capital and labor has become even more unequal. The capitalist commands a greater amount of labor with the same capital. The power of the capitalist class over the working class has grown, the social position of the worker has become worse, has been forced down still another degree below that of the capitalist.

What, then, is the general law that determines the rise and fall of wages and profit in their reciprocal relation?

They stand in inverse proportion to each other. The share of (profit) increases in the same proportion in which the share of labor (wages) falls, and vice versa. Profit rises in the same degree in which wages fall; it falls in the same degree in which wages rise.

It might perhaps be argued that the capitalist class can gain by an advantageous exchange of his products with other capitalists, by a rise in the demand for his commodities, whether in consequence of the opening up of new markets, or in consequence of temporarily increased demands in the old market, and so on; that the profit of the capitalist, therefore, may be multiplied by taking advantage of other capitalists, independently of the rise and fall of wages, of the exchange value of labor-power; or that the profit of the capitalist may also rise through improvements in the instruments of labor, new applications of the forces of nature, and so on.

But in the first place it must be admitted that the result remains the same, although brought about in an opposite manner. Profit, indeed, has not risen because wages have fallen, but wages have fallen because profit has risen. With the same amount of another man's labor the capitalist has bought a larger amount of exchange values without having paid more for the labor on that account—i.e., the work is paid for less in proportion to the net gain which it yields to the capitalist.

In the second place, it must be borne in mind that, despite the fluctuations in the prices of commodities, the average price of every commodity, the proportion in which it exchanges for other commodities, is determined by

its cost of production. The acts of overreaching and taking advantage of one another within the capitalist ranks necessarily equalize themselves. The improvements of machinery, the new applications of the forces of nature in the service of production, make it possible to produce in a given period of time, with the same amount of labor and capital, a larger amount of products, but in no wise a larger amount of exchange values. If by the use of the spinning-machine I can furnish twice as much yarn in an hour as before its invention—for instance, 100 pounds instead of 50 pounds—in the long run I receive back, in exchange for this 100 pounds no more commodities than I did before for 50; because the cost of production has fallen by 1/2, or because I can furnish double the product at the same cost.

Finally, in whatever proportion the capitalist class, whether of one country or of the entire world-market, distribute the net revenue of production among themselves, the total amount of this net revenue always consists exclusively of the amount by which accumulated labor has been increased from the proceeds of direct labor. This whole amount, therefore, grows in the same proportion in which labor augments capital—i.e., in the same proportion in which profit rises as compared with wages.

Chapter 8: The Interests of Capital and Wage-Labor are Diametrically Opposed

We thus see that, even if we keep ourselves within the relation of capital and wage-labor, the interests of capitals and the interests of wage-labor are diametrically opposed to each other.

A rapid growth of capital is synonymous with a rapid growth of profits. Profits can grow rapidly only when the price of labor—the relative wages—decrease just as rapidly. Relative wages may fall, although real wages rise simultaneously with nominal wages, with the money value of labor, provided only that the real wage does not rise in the same proportion as the profit. If, for instance, in good business years wages rise 5 percent, while profits rise 30 percent, the proportional relative wage has not increased, but decreased.

If, therefore, the income of the worker increases with the rapid growth of capital, there is at the same time a widening of the social chasm that divides the worker from the capitalist, and an increase in the power of capital over labor, a greater dependence of labor upon capital.

To say that "the worker has an interest in the rapid growth of capital", means only this: that the more speedily the worker augments the wealth of the capitalist, the larger will be the crumbs which fall to him, the greater will be the number of workers than can be called into existence, the more can the mass of slaves dependent upon capital be increased.

We have thus seen that even the most favorable situation for the working class, namely, the most rapid growth of capital, however much it may improve the material life of the worker, does not abolish the antagonism between his interests and the interests of the capitalist. Profit and wages remain as before, in inverse proportion.

If capital grows rapidly, wages may rise, but the profit of capital rises disproportionately faster. The material position of the worker has improved,

but at the cost of his social position. The social chasm that separates him from the capitalist has widened.

Finally, to say that "the most favorable condition for wage-labor is the fastest possible growth of productive capital", is the same as to say: the quicker the working class multiplies and augments the power inimical to it —the wealth of another which lords over that class—the more favorable will be the conditions under which it will be permitted to toil anew at the multiplication of bourgeois wealth, at the enlargement of the power of capital, content thus to forge for itself the golden chains by which the bourgeoisie drags it in its train.

Growth of productive capital and rise of wages, are they really so indissolubly united as the bourgeois economists maintain? We must not believe their mere words. We dare not believe them even when they claim that the fatter capital is the more will its slave be pampered. The bourgeoisie is too much enlightened, it keeps its accounts much too carefully, to share the prejudices of the feudal lord, who makes an ostentatious display of the magnificence of his retinue. The conditions of existence of the bourgeoisie compel it to attend carefully to its bookkeeping. We must therefore examine more closely into the following question:

In what manner does the growth of productive capital affect wages?

If as a whole, the productive capital of bourgeois society grows, there takes place a more many-sided accumulation of labor. The individual capitals increase in number and in magnitude. The multiplications of individual capitals increases the competition among capitalists. The increasing magnitude of increasing capitals provides the means of leading more powerful armies of workers with more gigantic instruments of war upon the industrial battlefield.

The one capitalist can drive the other from the field and carry off his capital only by selling more cheaply. In order to sell more cheaply without ruining himself, he must produce more cheaply—i.e., increase the productive forces of labor as much as possible.

But the productive forces of labor are increased above all by a greater division of labor and by a more general introduction and constant

improvement of machinery. The larger the army of workers among whom the labor is subdivided, the more gigantic the scale upon which machinery is introduced, the more in proportion does the cost of production decrease, the more fruitful is the labor. And so there arises among the capitalists a universal rivalry for the increase of the division of labor and of machinery and for their exploitation upon the greatest possible scale.

If, now, by a greater division of labor, by the application and improvement of new machines, by a more advantageous exploitation of the forces of nature on a larger scale, a capitalist has found the means of producing with the same amount of labor (whether it be direct or accumulated labor) a larger amount of products of commodities than his competitors—if, for instance, he can produce a whole yard of linen in the same labor-time in which his competitors weave half-a-yard—how will this capitalist act?

He could keep on selling half-a-yard of linen at old market price; but this would not have the effect of driving his opponents from the field and enlarging his own market. But his need for a market has increased in the same measure in which his productive power has extended. The more powerful and costly means of production that he has called into existence enable him, it is true, to sell his wares more cheaply, but they compel him at the same time to sell more wares, to get control of a very much greater market for his commodities; consequently, this capitalist will sell his half-yard of linen more cheaply than his competitors.

But the capitalist will not sell the whole yard so cheaply as his competitors sell the half-yard, although the production of the whole yard costs him no more than does that of the half-yard to the others. Otherwise, he would make no extra profit, and would get back in exchange only the cost of production. He might obtain a greater income from having set in motion a larger capital, but not from having made a greater profit on his capital than the others. Moreover, he attains the object he is aiming at if he prices his goods only a small percentage lower than his competitors. He drives them off the field, he wrests from them at least part of their market, by underselling them.

And finally, let us remember that the current price always stands either above or below the cost of production, whether the sale of a commodity takes place in the favorable or unfavorable period of the industry.

According as the market price of the yard of linen stands above or below its former cost of production, will the percentage vary at which the capitalist who has made use of the new and more faithful means of production sell above his real cost of production.

But the privilege of our capitalist is not of long duration. Other competing capitalists introduce the same machines, the same division of labor, and introduce them upon the same or even upon a greater scale. And finally this introduction becomes so universal that the price of the linen is lowered not only below its old, but even below its new cost of production.

The capitalists therefore find themselves, in their mutual relations, in the same situation in which they were before the introduction of the new means of production; and if they are by these means enabled to offer double the product at the old price, they are now forced to furnish double the product for less than the old price. Having arrived at the new point, the new cost of production, the battle for supremacy in the market has to be fought out anew. Given more division of labor and more machinery, there results a greater scale upon which division of labor and machinery are exploited. And competition again brings the same reaction against this result.

Chapter 9: Effect of Capitalist Competition on the Capitalist Class, Middle Class, and Working Class

We thus see how the method of production and the means of production are constantly enlarged, revolutionized, how division of labor necessarily draws after it greater division of labor, the employment of machinery greater employment of machinery, work upon a large scale work upon a still greater scale. This is the law that continually throws capitalist production out of its old ruts and compels capital to strain ever more the productive forces of labor for the very reason that it has already strained them—the law that grants it no respite, and constantly shouts in its ear: March! march! This is no other law than that which, within the periodical fluctuations of commerce, necessarily adjusts the price of a commodity to its cost of production.

No matter how powerful the means of production which a capitalist may bring into the field, competition will make their adoption general; and from the moment that they have been generally adopted, the sole result of the greater productiveness of his capital will be that he must furnish at the same price, 10, 20, 100 times as much as before. But since he must find a market for, perhaps, 1,000 times as much, in order to outweigh the lower selling price by the greater quantity of the sale; since now a more extensive sale is necessary not only to gain a greater profit, but also in order to replace the cost of production (the instrument of production itself grows always more costly, as we have seen), and since this more extensive sale has become a question of life and death not only for him, but also for his rivals, the old struggle must begin again, and it is all the more violent the more powerful the means of production already invented are. The division of labor and the application of machinery will therefore take a fresh start, and upon an even greater scale.

Whatever be the power of the means of production which are employed, competition seeks to rob capital of the golden fruits of this power by reducing the price of commodities to the cost of production; in the same measure in which production is cheapened—i.e., in the same measure in

which more can be produced with the same amount of labor—it compels by a law which is irresistible a still greater cheapening of production, the sale of ever greater masses of product for smaller prices. Thus the capitalist will have gained nothing more by his efforts than the obligation to furnish a greater product in the same labor-time; in a word, more difficult conditions for the profitable employment of his capital. While competition, therefore, constantly pursues him with its law of the cost of production and turns against himself every weapon that he forges against his rivals, the capitalist continually seeks to get the best of competition by restlessly introducing further subdivision of labor and new machines, which, though more expensive, enable him to produce more cheaply, instead of waiting until the new machines shall have been rendered obsolete by competition.

If we now conceive this feverish agitation as it operates in the market of the whole world, we shall be in a position to comprehend how the growth, accumulation, and concentration of capital bring in their train an ever more detailed subdivision of labor, an ever greater improvement of old machines, and a constant application of new machine—a process which goes on uninterruptedly, with feverish haste, and upon an ever more gigantic scale.

But what effect do these conditions, which are inseparable from the growth of productive capital, have upon the determination of wages?

The greater division of labor enables one laborer to accomplish the work of five, 10, or 20 laborers; it therefore increases competition among the laborers fivefold, tenfold, or twentyfold. The laborers compete not only by selling themselves one cheaper than the other, but also by one doing the work of five, 10, or 20; and they are forced to compete in this manner by the division of labor, which is introduced and steadily improved by capital.

Furthermore, to the same degree in which the division of labor increases, is the labor simplified. The special skill of the laborer becomes worthless. He becomes transformed into a simple monotonous force of production, with neither physical nor mental elasticity. His work becomes accessible to all; therefore competitors press upon him from all sides. Moreover, it must be remembered that the more simple, the more easily learned the work is, so much the less is its cost to production, the expense of its acquisition, and so much the lower must the wages sink—for, like the price of any other commodity, they are determined by the cost of production. Therefore, in the

same manner in which labor becomes more unsatisfactory, more repulsive, does competition increase and wages decrease.

The laborer seeks to maintain the total of his wages for a given time by performing more labor, either by working a great number of hours, or by accomplishing more in the same number of hours. Thus, urged on by want, he himself multiplies the disastrous effects of division of labor. The result is: the more he works, the less wages he receives. And for this simple reason: the more he works, the more he competes against his fellow workmen, the more he compels them to compete against him, and to offer themselves on the same wretched conditions as he does; so that, in the last analysis, he competes against himself as a member of the working class.

Machinery produces the same effects, but upon a much larger scale. It supplants skilled laborers by unskilled, men by women, adults by children; where newly introduced, it throws workers upon the streets in great masses; and as it becomes more highly developed and more productive it discards them in additional though smaller numbers.

We have hastily sketched in broad outlines the industrial war of capitalists among themselves. This war has the peculiarity that the battles in it are won less by recruiting than by discharging the army of workers. The generals (the capitalists) vie with one another as to who can discharge the greatest number of industrial soldiers.

The economists tell us, to be sure, that those laborers who have been rendered superfluous by machinery find new venues of employment. They dare not assert directly that the same laborers that have been discharged find situations in new branches of labor. Facts cry out too loudly against this lie. Strictly speaking, they only maintain that new means of employment will be found for other sections of the working class; for example, for that portion of the young generation of laborers who were about to enter upon that branch of industry which had just been abolished. Of course, this is a great satisfaction to the disabled laborers. There will be no lack of fresh exploitable blood and muscle for the Messrs. Capitalists—the dead may bury their dead. This consolation seems to be intended more for the comfort of the capitalists themselves than their laborers. If the whole class of the wage-laborer were to be annihilated by machinery, how terrible that would be for capital, which, without wage-labor, ceases to be capital!

But even if we assume that all who are directly forced out of employment by machinery, as well as all of the rising generation who were waiting for a chance of employment in the same branch of industry, do actually find some new employment—are we to believe that this new employment will pay as high wages as did the one they have lost? If it did, it would be in contradiction to the laws of political economy. We have seen how modern industry always tends to the substitution of the simpler and more subordinate employments for the higher and more complex ones. How, then, could a mass of workers thrown out of one branch of industry by machinery find refuge in another branch, unless they were to be paid more poorly?

An exception to the law has been adduced, namely, the workers who are employed in the manufacture of machinery itself. As soon as there is in industry a greater demand for and a greater consumption of machinery, it is said that the number of machines must necessarily increase; consequently, also, the manufacture of machines; consequently, also, the employment of workers in machine manufacture; and the workers employed in this branch of industry are skilled, even educated, workers.

Since the year 1840 this assertion, which even before that date was only half-true, has lost all semblance of truth; for the most diverse machines are now applied to the manufacture of the machines themselves on quite as extensive a scale as in the manufacture of cotton yarn, and the laborers employed in machine factories can but play the role of very stupid machines alongside of the highly ingenious machines.

But in place of the man who has been dismissed by the machine, the factory may employ, perhaps, three children and one woman! And must not the wages of the man have previously sufficed for the three children and one woman? Must not the minimum wages have sufficed for the preservation and propagation of the race? What, then, do these beloved bourgeois phrases prove? Nothing more than that now four times as many workers' lives are used up as there were previously, in order to obtain the livelihood of one working family.

To sum up: the more productive capital grows, the more it extends the division of labor and the application of machinery; the more the division of

labor and the application of machinery extend, the more competition extends among the workers, the more their wages shrink together.

In addition, the working class is also recruited from the higher strata of society; a mass of small businessmen and of people living upon the interest of their capitals is precipitated into the ranks of the working class, and they will have nothing else to do than to stretch out their arms alongside of the arms of the workers. Thus the forest of outstretched arms, begging for work, grows ever thicker, while the arms themselves grow ever leaner.

It is evident that the small manufacturer cannot survive in a struggle in which the first condition of success is production upon an ever greater scale. It is evident that the small manufacturers and thereby increasing the number of candidates for the proletariat—all this requires no further elucidation.

Finally, in the same measure in which the capitalists are compelled, by the movement described above, to exploit the already existing gigantic means of production on an ever-increasing scale, and for this purpose to set in motion all the mainsprings of credit, in the same measure do they increase the industrial earthquakes, in the midst of which the commercial world can preserve itself only by sacrificing a portion of its wealth, its products, and even its forces of production, to the gods of the lower world—in short, the crises increase. They become more frequent and more violent, if for no other reason, than for this alone, that in the same measure in which the mass of products grows, and therefore the needs for extensive markets, in the same measure does the world market shrink ever more, and ever fewer markets remain to be exploited, since every previous crisis has subjected to the commerce of the world a hitherto unconquered or but superficially exploited market.

But capital not only lives upon labor. Like a master, at once distinguished and barbarous, it drags with it into its grave the corpses of its slaves, whole hecatombs of workers, who perish in the crises.

We thus see that if capital grows rapidly, competition among the workers grows with even greater rapidity—i.e., the means of employment and subsistence for the working class decrease in proportion even more rapidly;

but, this notwithstanding, the rapid growth of capital is the most favorable condition for wage-labor.

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[1] "By classical political economy, I understand that economy which, since the time of W. Petty, has investigated the real relations of production in bourgeois society, in contradistinction to vulgar economy, which deals with appearances only, ruminates without ceasing on the materials long since provided by scientific economy, and there seeks plausible explanations of the most obtrusive phenomena for bourgeois daily use, but for the rest confines itself to systematizing in a pedantic way, and proclaiming for everlasting truths, trite ideas held by the self-complacent bourgeoisie with regard to their own world, to them the best of all possible worlds."

Socialism: Utopian and Scientific

by Friedrich Engels, 1880

Chapter 1: The Development of Utopian Socialism

Modern Socialism is, in its essence, the direct product of the recognition, on the one hand, of the class antagonisms existing in the society of today between proprietors and non-proprietors, between capitalists and wage-workers; on the other hand, of the anarchy existing in production. But, in its theoretical form, modern Socialism originally appears ostensibly as a more logical extension of the principles laid down by the great French philosophers of the 18th century. Like every new theory, modern Socialism had, at first, to connect itself with the intellectual stock-in-trade ready to its hand, however deeply its roots lay in material economic facts.

The great men, who in France prepared men's minds for the coming revolution, were themselves extreme revolutionists. They recognized no external authority of any kind whatsoever. Religion, natural science, society, political institutions—everything was subjected to the most unsparing criticism: everything must justify its existence before the judgment-seat of reason or give up existence. Reason became the sole measure of everything. It was the time when, as Hegel says, the world stood upon its head; [1] first in the sense that the human head, and the principles arrived at by its thought, claimed to be the basis of all human action and association; but by and by, also, in the wider sense that the reality which was in contradiction to these principles had, in fact, to be turned upside down. Every form of society and government then existing, every old traditional notion, was flung into the lumber-room as irrational; the world had hitherto allowed itself to be led solely by prejudices; everything in the past deserved only pity and contempt. Now, for the first time, appeared the light of day, the kingdom of reason; henceforth superstition, injustice, privilege, oppression, were to be superseded by eternal truth, eternal Right, equality based on Nature and the inalienable rights of man.

We know today that this kingdom of reason was nothing more than the idealized kingdom of the bourgeoisie; that this eternal Right found its realization in bourgeois justice; that this equality reduced itself to bourgeois equality before the law; that bourgeois property was proclaimed as one of

the essential rights of man; and that the government of reason, the *Contrat Social* of Rousseau, came into being, and only could come into being, as a democratic bourgeois republic. The great thinkers of the 18th century could, no more than their predecessors, go beyond the limits imposed upon them by their epoch.

But, side by side with the antagonisms of the feudal nobility and the burghers, who claimed to represent all the rest of society, was the general antagonism of exploiters and exploited, of rich idlers and poor workers. It was this very circumstance that made it possible for the representatives of the bourgeoisie to put themselves forward as representing not one special class, but the whole of suffering humanity. Still further. From its origin the bourgeoisie was saddled with its antithesis: capitalists cannot exist without wage-workers, and, in the same proportion as the medieval burgher of the guild developed into the modern bourgeois, the guild journeyman and the day-laborer, outside the guilds, developed into the proletarian. And although, upon the whole, the bourgeoisie, in their struggle with the nobility, could claim to represent at the same time the interests of the different working-classes of that period, yet in every great bourgeois movement there were independent outbursts of that class which was the forerunner, more or less developed, of the modern proletariat. For example, at the time of the German Reformation and the Peasants' War, the Anabaptists and Thomas Münzer; in the great English Revolution, the Levellers; in the great French Revolution, Babeuf.

These were theoretical enunciations, corresponding with these revolutionary uprisings of a class not yet developed; in the 16th and 17th centuries, Utopian pictures of ideal social conditions; in the 18th century, actual communistic theories (Morelly and Mably). [2] The demand for equality was no longer limited to political rights; it was extended also to the social conditions of individuals. It was not simply class privileges that were to be abolished, but class distinctions themselves. A Communism, ascetic, denouncing all the pleasures of life, Spartan, was the first form of the new teaching. Then came the three great Utopians: Saint-Simon, to whom the middle-class movement, side by side with the proletarian, still had a certain significance; Fourier; and Owen, who in the country where capitalist production was most developed, and under the influence of the antagonisms

begotten of this, worked out his proposals for the removal of class distinction systematically and in direct relation to French materialism.

One thing is common to all three. Not one of them appears as a representative of the interests of that proletariat which historical development had, in the meantime, produced. Like the French philosophers, they do not claim to emancipate a particular class to begin with, but all humanity at once. Like them, they wish to bring in the kingdom of reason and eternal justice, but this kingdom, as they see it, is as far as Heaven from Earth, from that of the French philosophers.

For, to our three social reformers, the bourgeois world, based upon the principles of these philosophers, is quite as irrational and unjust, and, therefore, finds its way to the dust-hole quite as readily as feudalism and all the earlier stages of society. If pure reason and justice have not, hitherto, ruled the world, this has been the case only because men have not rightly understood them. What was wanted was the individual man of genius, who has now arisen and who understands the truth. That he has now arisen, that the truth has now been clearly understood, is not an inevitable event, following of necessity in the chains of historical development, but a mere happy accident. He might just as well have been born 500 years earlier, and might then have spared humanity 500 years of error, strife, and suffering.

We saw how the French philosophers of the 18th century, the forerunners of the Revolution, appealed to reason as the sole judge of all that is. A rational government, rational society, were to be founded; everything that ran counter to eternal reason was to be remorselessly done away with.

We saw also that this eternal reason was in reality nothing but the idealized understanding of the 18th century citizen, just then evolving into the bourgeois. The French Revolution had realized this rational society and government.

But the new order of things, rational enough as compared with earlier conditions, turned out to be by no means absolutely rational. The state based upon reason completely collapsed. Rousseau's *Contrat Social* had found its realization in the Reign of Terror, from which the bourgeoisie, who had lost confidence in their own political capacity, had taken refuge first in the corruption of the Directorate, and, finally, under the wing of the

Napoleonic despotism. The promised eternal peace was turned into an endless war of conquest. The society based upon reason had fared no better. The antagonism between rich and poor, instead of dissolving into general prosperity, had become intensified by the removal of the guild and other privileges, which had to some extent bridged it over, and by the removal of the charitable institutions of the Church. The "freedom of property" from feudal fetters, now veritably accomplished, turned out to be, for the small capitalists and small proprietors, the freedom to sell their small property, crushed under the overmastering competition of the large capitalists and landlords, to these great lords, and thus, as far as the small capitalists and peasant proprietors were concerned, became "freedom *from* property". The development of industry upon a capitalistic basis made poverty and misery of the working masses conditions of existence of society. Cash payment became more and more, in Carlyle's phrase [See Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present* , London 1843], the sole nexus between man and man. The number of crimes increased from year to year. Formerly, the feudal vices had openly stalked about in broad daylight; though not eradicated, they were now at any rate thrust into the background. In their stead, the bourgeois vices, hitherto practiced in secret, began to blossom all the more luxuriantly. Trade became to a greater and greater extent cheating. The "fraternity" of the revolutionary motto was realized in the chicanery and rivalries of the battle of competition. Oppression by force was replaced by corruption; the sword, as the first social lever, by gold. The right of the first night was transferred from the feudal lords to the bourgeois manufacturers. Prostitution increased to an extent never heard of. Marriage itself remained, as before, the legally recognized form, the official cloak of prostitution, and, moreover, was supplemented by rich crops of adultery.

In a word, compared with the splendid promises of the philosophers, the social and political institutions born of the "triumph of reason" were bitterly disappointing caricatures. All that was wanted was the men to formulate this disappointment, and they came with the turn of the century. In 1802, Saint-Simon's Geneva letters appeared; in 1808 appeared Fourier's first work, although the groundwork of his theory dated from 1799; on January 1, 1800, Robert Owen undertook the direction of New Lanark.

At this time, however, the capitalist mode of production, and with it the antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, was still very

incompletely developed. Modern Industry, which had just arisen in England, was still unknown in France. But Modern Industry develops, on the one hand, the conflicts which make absolutely necessary a revolution in the mode of production, and the doing away with its capitalistic character—conflicts not only between the classes begotten of it, but also between the very productive forces and the forms of exchange created by it. And, on the other hand, it develops, in these very gigantic productive forces, the means of ending these conflicts. If, therefore, about the year 1800, the conflicts arising from the new social order were only just beginning to take shape, this holds still more fully as to the means of ending them. The "have-nothing" masses of Paris, during the Reign of Terror, were able for a moment to gain the mastery, and thus to lead the bourgeois revolution to victory in spite of the bourgeoisie themselves. But, in doing so, they only proved how impossible it was for their domination to last under the conditions then obtained. The proletariat, which then for the first time evolved itself from these "have-nothing" masses as the nucleus of a new class, as yet quite incapable of independent political action, appeared as an oppressed, suffering order, to whom, in its incapacity to help itself, help could, at best, be brought in from without or down from above.

This historical situation also dominated the founders of Socialism. To the crude conditions of capitalistic production and the crude class conditions correspond to crude theories. The solution of the social problems, which as yet lay hidden in undeveloped economic conditions, the Utopians attempted to evolve out of the human brain. Society presented nothing but wrongs; to remove these was the task of reason. It was necessary, then, to discover a new and more perfect system of social order and to impose this upon society from without by propaganda, and, wherever it was possible, by the example of model experiments. These new social systems were foredoomed as Utopian; the more completely they were worked out in detail, the more they could not avoid drifting off into pure phantasies.

These facts once established, we need not dwell a moment longer upon this side of the question, now wholly belonging to the past. We can leave it to the literary small fry to solemnly quibble over these phantasies, which today only make us smile, and to crow over the superiority of their own bald reasoning, as compared with such "insanity". For ourselves, we delight in the stupendously grand thoughts and germs of thought that everywhere

break out through their phantastic covering, and to which these Philistines are blind.

Saint-Simon was a son of the great French Revolution, at the outbreak of which he was not yet 30. The Revolution was the victory of the 3rd estate—i.e., of the great masses of the nation, *working* in production and in trade, over the privileged *idle* classes, the nobles and the priests. But the victory of the 3rd estate soon revealed itself as exclusively the victory of a smaller part of this "estate", as the conquest of political power by the socially privileged section of it—i.e., the propertied bourgeoisie. And the bourgeoisie had certainly developed rapidly during the Revolution, partly by speculation in the lands of the nobility and of the Church, confiscated and afterwards put up for sale, and partly by frauds upon the nation by means of army contracts. It was the domination of these swindlers that, under the Directorate, brought France to the verge of ruin, and thus gave Napoleon the pretext for his *coup d'état* .

Hence, to Saint-Simon the antagonism between the 3rd Estate and the privileged classes took the form of an antagonism between "workers" and "idlers". The idlers were not merely the old privileged classes, but also all who, without taking any part in production or distribution, lived on their incomes. And the workers were not only the wage-workers, but also the manufacturers, the merchants, the bankers. That the idlers had lost the capacity for intellectual leadership and political supremacy had been proved, and was by the Revolution finally settled. That the non-possessing classes had not this capacity seemed to Saint-Simon proved by the experiences of the Reign of Terror. Then, who was to lead and command? According to Saint-Simon, science and industry, both united by a new religious bond, destined to restore that unity of religious ideas which had been lost since the time of the Reformation—a necessarily mystic and rigidly hierarchic "new Christianity". But science, that was the scholars; and industry, that was, in the first place, the working bourgeois, manufacturers, merchants, bankers. These bourgeois were, certainly, intended by Saint-Simon to transform themselves into a kind of public officials, of social trustees; but they were still to hold, *vis-à-vis* of the workers, a commanding and economically privileged position. The bankers especially were to be called upon to direct the whole of social production by the regulation of credit. This conception was in exact keeping with a time in

which Modern Industry in France and, with it, the chasm between bourgeoisie and proletariat was only just coming into existence. But what Saint-Simon especially lays stress upon is this: what interests him first, and above all other things, is the lot of the class that is the most numerous and the most poor (“ *la classe la plus nombreuse et la plus pauvr* e”).

Already in his Geneva letters, Saint-Simon lays down the proposition that “all men ought to work”. In the same work he recognizes also that the Reign of Terror was the reign of the non-possessing masses.

“See,” says he to them, “what happened in France at the time when your comrades held sway there; they brought about a famine.” [*Lettres d’un habitant de Genève à ses contemporains* , Saint-Simon, 1803]

But to recognize the French Revolution as a class war, and not simply one between nobility and bourgeoisie, but between nobility, bourgeoisie, and the non-possessors, was, in the year 1802, a most pregnant discovery. In 1816, he declares that politics is the science of production, and foretells the complete absorption of politics by economics. The knowledge that economic conditions are the basis of political institutions appears here only in embryo . Yet what is here, already very plainly expressed, is the idea of the future conversion of political rule over men into an administration of things and a direction of processes of production—that is to say, the “abolition of the state”, about which recently there has been so much noise.

Saint-Simon shows the same superiority over his contemporaries, when in 1814, immediately after the entry of the allies into Paris, and again in 1815, during the Hundred Days’ War, he proclaims the alliance of France and England, and then of both of these countries, with Germany, as the only guarantee for the prosperous development and peace of Europe. To preach to the French in 1815 an alliance with the victors of Waterloo required as much courage as historical foresight.

If in Saint-Simon we find a comprehensive breadth of view, by virtue of which almost all the ideas of later Socialists that are not strictly economic are found in him in embryo, we find in Fourier a criticism of the existing conditions of society, genuinely French and witty, but not upon that account any the less thorough. Fourier takes the bourgeoisie, their inspired prophets before the Revolution, and their interested eulogists after it, at their own

word. He lays bare remorselessly the material and moral misery of the bourgeois world. He confronts it with the earlier philosophers' dazzling promises of a society in which reason alone should reign, of a civilization in which happiness should be universal, of an illimitable human perfectibility, and with the rose-colored phraseology of the bourgeois ideologists of his time. He points out how everywhere the most pitiful reality corresponds with the most high-sounding phrases, and he overwhelms this hopeless fiasco of phrases with his mordant sarcasm.

Fourier is not only a critic, his imperturbable serene nature makes him a satirist, and assuredly one of the greatest satirists of all time. He depicts, with equal power and charm, the swindling speculations that blossomed out upon the downfall of the Revolution, and the shopkeeping spirit prevalent in, and characteristic of, French commerce at that time. Still more masterly is his criticism of the bourgeois form of the relations between sexes, and the position of women in bourgeois society. He was the first to declare that in any given society the degree of woman's emancipation is the natural measure of the general emancipation.

But Fourier is at his greatest in his conception of the history of society. He divides its whole course, thus far, into four stages of evolution—savagery, barbarism, the patriarchate, civilization. This last is identical with the so-called civil, or bourgeois, society of today—i.e., with the social order that came in with the 16th century. He proves "that the civilized stage raises every vice practiced by barbarism in a simple fashion into a form of existence, complex, ambiguous, equivocal, hypocritical"—that civilization moves "in a vicious circle", in contradictions which it constantly reproduces without being able to solve them; hence it constantly arrives at the very opposite to that which it wants to attain, or pretends to want to attain, so that, e.g., "under civilization poverty is born of superabundance itself". [*Théorie de l'unite universelle* , Fourier, 1843 and *Le nouveau monde industriel et sociétaire, ou invention du procédé d'industrie attrayante et enaturelle distribuée en séries passionnées* , Fourier, 1845]

Fourier, as we see, uses the dialectic method in the same masterly way as his contemporary, Hegel. Using these same dialectics, he argues against talk about illimitable human perfectibility, that every historical phase has its period of ascent and also its period of descent, and he applies this

observation to the future of the whole human race. As Kant introduced into natural science the idea of the ultimate destruction of the Earth, Fourier introduced into historical science that of the ultimate destruction of the human race.

Whilst in France the hurricane of the Revolution swept over the land, in England a quieter, but not on that account less tremendous, revolution was going on. Steam and the new tool-making machinery were transforming manufacture into modern industry, and thus revolutionizing the whole foundation of bourgeois society. The sluggish march of development of the manufacturing period changed into a veritable storm and stress period of production. With constantly increasing swiftness the splitting-up into large capitalists and non-possessing proletarians went on. Between these, instead of the former stable middle-class, an unstable mass of artisans and small shopkeepers, the most fluctuating portion of the population, now led a precarious existence.

The new mode of production was, as yet, only at the beginning of its period of ascent; as yet it was the normal, regular method of production—the only one possible under existing conditions. Nevertheless, even then it was producing crying social abuses—the herding together of a homeless population in the worst quarters of the large towns; the loosening of all traditional moral bonds, of patriarchal subordination, of family relations; overwork, especially of women and children, to a frightful extent; complete demoralization of the working-class, suddenly flung into altogether new conditions, from the country into the town, from agriculture into modern industry, from stable conditions of existence into insecure ones that change from day to day.

At this juncture there came forward as a reformer, a manufacturer 29-years-old—a man of almost sublime, childlike simplicity of character, and at the same time one of the few born leaders of men. Robert Owen had adopted the teaching of the materialistic philosophers: that man’s character is the product, on the one hand, of heredity; on the other, of the environment of the individual during his lifetime, and especially during his period of development. In the industrial revolution most of his class saw only chaos and confusion, and the opportunity of fishing in these troubled waters and making large fortunes quickly. He saw in it the opportunity of putting into

practice his favorite theory, and so of bringing order out of chaos. He had already tried it with success, as superintendent of more than 500 men in a Manchester factory. From 1800 to 1829, he directed the great cotton mill at New Lanark, in Scotland, as managing partner, along the same lines, but with greater freedom of action and with a success that made him a European reputation. A population, originally consisting of the most diverse and, for the most part, very demoralized elements, a population that gradually grew to 2,500, he turned into a model colony, in which drunkenness, police, magistrates, lawsuits, poor laws, charity, were unknown. And all this simply by placing the people in conditions worthy of human beings, and especially by carefully bringing up the rising generation. He was the founder of infant schools, and introduced them first at New Lanark. At the age of two, the children came to school, where they enjoyed themselves so much that they could scarcely get home again. Whilst his competitors worked their people 13 or 14 hours a day, in New Lanark the working-day was only 10 and a half hours. When a crisis in cotton stopped work for four months, his workers received their full wages all the time. And with all this the business more than doubled in value, and to the last yielded large profits to its proprietors.

In spite of all this, Owen was not content. The existence which he secured for his workers was, in his eyes, still far from being worthy of human beings. "The people were slaves at my mercy." The relatively favorable conditions in which he had placed them were still far from allowing a rational development of the character and of the intellect in all directions, much less of the free exercise of all their faculties.

“And yet, the working part of this population of 2,500 persons was daily producing as much real wealth for society as, less than half a century before, it would have required the working part of a population of 600,000 to create. I asked myself, what became of the difference between the wealth consumed by 2,500 persons and that which would have been consumed by 600,000?” [3]

The answer was clear. It had been used to pay the proprietors of the establishment 5 per cent on the capital they had laid out, in addition to over £300,000 clear profit. And that which held for New Lanark held to a still greater extent for all the factories in England.

“If this new wealth had not been created by machinery, imperfectly as it has been applied, the wars of Europe, in opposition to Napoleon, and to support the aristocratic principles of society, could not have been maintained. And yet this new power was the creation of the working-classes.” (Note, l. c., p. 22)

To them, therefore, the fruits of this new power belonged. The newly-created gigantic productive forces, hitherto used only to enrich individuals and to enslave the masses, offered to Owen the foundations for a reconstruction of society; they were destined, as the common property of all, to be worked for the common good of all.

Owen’s communism was based upon this purely business foundation, the outcome, so to say, of commercial calculation. Throughout, it maintained this practical character. Thus, in 1823, Owen proposed the relief of the distress in Ireland by Communist colonies, and drew up complete estimates of costs of founding them, yearly expenditure, and probable revenue. And in his definite plan for the future, the technical working out of details is managed with such practical knowledge—ground plan, front and side and bird’s-eye views all included—that the Owen method of social reform once accepted, there is from the practical point of view little to be said against the actual arrangement of details.

His advance in the direction of Communism was the turning-point in Owen’s life. As long as he was simply a philanthropist, he was rewarded with nothing but wealth, applause, honor, and glory. He was the most popular man in Europe. Not only men of his own class, but statesmen and princes listened to him approvingly. But when he came out with his Communist theories that was quite another thing. Three great obstacles seemed to him especially to block the path to social reform: private property, religion, the present form of marriage.

He knew what confronted him if he attacked these—outlawry, excommunication from official society, the loss of his whole social position. But nothing of this prevented him from attacking them without fear of consequences, and what he had foreseen happened. Banished from official society, with a conspiracy of silence against him in the press, ruined by his unsuccessful Communist experiments in America, in which he sacrificed all

his fortune, he turned directly to the working-class and continued working in their midst for 30 years. Every social movement, every real advance in England on behalf of the workers links itself on to the name of Robert Owen. He forced through in 1819, after five years' fighting, the first law limiting the hours of labor of women and children in factories. He was president of the first Congress at which all the Trade Unions of England united in a single great trade association. He introduced as transition measures to the complete communistic organization of society, on the one hand, cooperative societies for retail trade and production. These have since that time, at least, given practical proof that the merchant and the manufacturer are socially quite unnecessary. On the other hand, he introduced labor bazaars for the exchange of the products of labor through the medium of labor-notes, whose unit was a single hour of work; institutions necessarily doomed to failure, but completely anticipating Proudhon's bank of exchange of a much later period, and differing entirely from this in that it did not claim to be the panacea for all social ills, but only a first step towards a much more radical revolution of society.

The Utopians' mode of thought has for a long time governed the Socialist ideas of the 19th century, and still governs some of them. Until very recently, all French and English Socialists did homage to it. The earlier German Communism, including that of Weitling, was of the same school. To all these, Socialism is the expression of absolute truth, reason and justice, and has only to be discovered to conquer all the world by virtue of its own power. And as an absolute truth is independent of time, space, and of the historical development of man, it is a mere accident when and where it is discovered. With all this, absolute truth, reason, and justice are different with the founder of each different school. And as each one's special kind of absolute truth, reason, and justice is again conditioned by his subjective understanding, his conditions of existence, the measure of his knowledge and his intellectual training, there is no other ending possible in this conflict of absolute truths than that they shall be mutually exclusive of one another. Hence, from this nothing could come but a kind of eclectic, average Socialism, which, as a matter of fact, has up to the present time dominated the minds of most of the socialist workers in France and England. Hence, a mish-mash allowing of the most manifold shades of opinion: a mish-mash of such critical statements, economic theories, pictures of future society by

the founders of different sects, as excite a minimum of opposition; a mish-mash which is the more easily brewed the more definite sharp edges of the individual constituents are rubbed down in the stream of debate, like rounded pebbles in a brook.

To make a science of Socialism, it had first to be placed upon a real basis.

Chapter 2: Dialectics

In the meantime, along with and after the French philosophy of the 18th century, had arisen the new German philosophy, culminating in Hegel.

Its greatest merit was the taking up again of dialectics as the highest form of reasoning. The old Greek philosophers were all born natural dialecticians, and Aristotle, the most encyclopedic of them, had already analyzed the most essential forms of dialectic thought. The newer philosophy, on the other hand, although in it also dialectics had brilliant exponents (e.g. Descartes and Spinoza), had, especially through English influence, become more and more rigidly fixed in the so-called metaphysical mode of reasoning, by which also the French of the 18th century were almost wholly dominated, at all events in their special philosophical work. Outside philosophy in the restricted sense, the French nevertheless produced masterpieces of dialectic. We need only call to mind Diderot's *Le Neveu de Rameau* , and Rousseau's *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inegalite parmi les hommes* . We give here, in brief, the essential character of these two modes of thought.

When we consider and reflect upon Nature at large, or the history of mankind, or our own intellectual activity, at first we see the picture of an endless entanglement of relations and reactions, permutations and combinations, in which nothing remains what, where and as it was, but everything moves, changes, comes into being and passes away. We see, therefore, at first the picture as a whole, with its individual parts still more or less kept in the background; we observe the movements, transitions, connections, rather than the things that move, combine, and are connected. This primitive, naive but intrinsically correct conception of the world is that of ancient Greek philosophy, and was first clearly formulated by Heraclitus: everything is and is not, for everything is fluid, is constantly changing, constantly coming into being and passing away. [4]

But this conception, correctly as it expresses the general character of the picture of appearances as a whole, does not suffice to explain the details of

which this picture is made up, and so long as we do not understand these, we have not a clear idea of the whole picture. In order to understand these details, we must detach them from their natural, special causes, effects, etc. This is, primarily, the task of natural science and historical research: branches of science which the Greek of classical times, on very good grounds, relegated to a subordinate position, because they had first of all to collect materials for these sciences to work upon. A certain amount of natural and historical material must be collected before there can be any critical analysis, comparison, and arrangement in classes, orders, and species. The foundations of the exact natural sciences were, therefore, first worked out by the Greeks of the Alexandrian period, [5] and later on, in the Middle Ages, by the Arabs. Real natural science dates from the second half of the 15th century, and then onward it had advanced with constantly increasing rapidity. The analysis of Nature into its individual parts, the grouping of the different natural processes and objects in definite classes, the study of the internal anatomy of organized bodies in their manifold forms—these were the fundamental conditions of the gigantic strides in our knowledge of Nature that have been made during the last 400 years. But this method of work has also left us as legacy the habit of observing natural objects and processes in isolation, apart from their connection with the vast whole; of observing them in repose, not in motion; as constraints, not as essentially variables; in their death, not in their life. And when this way of looking at things was transferred by Bacon and Locke from natural science to philosophy, it brought forth the narrow, metaphysical mode of thought peculiar to the last century.

To the metaphysician, things and their mental reflexes, ideas, are isolated, are to be considered one after the other and apart from each other, are objects of investigation fixed, rigid, given once for all. He thinks in absolutely irreconcilable antitheses. His communication is 'yea, yea; nay, nay'; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." For him, a thing either exists or does not exist; a thing cannot at the same time be itself and something else. Positive and negative absolutely exclude one another; cause and effect stand in a rigid antithesis, one to the other.

At first sight, this mode of thinking seems to us very luminous, because it is that of so-called sound commonsense. Only sound commonsense, respectable fellow that he is, in the homely realm of his own four walls, has

very wonderful adventures directly he ventures out into the wide world of research. And the metaphysical mode of thought, justifiable and necessary as it is in a number of domains whose extent varies according to the nature of the particular object of investigation, sooner or later reaches a limit, beyond which it becomes one-sided, restricted, abstract, lost in insoluble contradictions. In the contemplation of individual things, it forgets the connection between them; in the contemplation of their existence, it forgets the beginning and end of that existence; of their repose, it forgets their motion. It cannot see the woods for the trees.

For everyday purposes, we know and can say, e.g., whether an animal is alive or not. But, upon closer inquiry, we find that this is, in many cases, a very complex question, as the jurists know very well. They have cudgelled their brains in vain to discover a rational limit beyond which the killing of the child in its mother's womb is murder. It is just as impossible to determine absolutely the moment of death, for physiology proves that death is not an instantaneous, momentary phenomenon, but a very protracted process.

In like manner, every organized being is every moment the same and not the same; every moment, it assimilates matter supplied from without, and gets rid of other matter; every moment, some cells of its body die and others build themselves anew; in a longer or shorter time, the matter of its body is completely renewed, and is replaced by other molecules of matter, so that every organized being is always itself, and yet something other than itself.

Further, we find upon closer investigation that the two poles of an antithesis, positive and negative, e.g., are as inseparable as they are opposed, and that despite all their opposition, they mutually interpenetrate. And we find, in like manner, that cause and effect are conceptions which only hold good in their application to individual cases; but as soon as we consider the individual cases in their general connection with the universe as a whole, they run into each other, and they become confounded when we contemplate that universal action and reaction in which causes and effects are eternally changing places, so that what is effect here and now will be cause there and then, and vice versa.

None of these processes and modes of thought enters into the framework of metaphysical reasoning. Dialectics, on the other hand, comprehends things

and their representations, ideas, in their essential connection, concatenation, motion, origin and ending. Such processes as those mentioned above are, therefore, so many corroborations of its own method of procedure.

Nature is the proof of dialectics, and it must be said for modern science that it has furnished this proof with very rich materials increasingly daily, and thus has shown that, in the last resort, Nature works dialectically and not metaphysically; that she does not move in the eternal oneness of a perpetually recurring circle, but goes through a real historical evolution. In this connection, Darwin must be named before all others. He dealt the metaphysical conception of Nature the heaviest blow by his proof that all organic beings, plants, animals, and man himself, are the products of a process of evolution going on through millions of years. But, the naturalists, who have learned to think dialectically, are few and far between, and this conflict of the results of discovery with preconceived modes of thinking, explains the endless confusion now reigning in theoretical natural science, the despair of teachers as well as learners, of authors and readers alike.

An exact representation of the universe, of its evolution, of the development of mankind, and of the reflection of this evolution in the minds of men, can therefore only be obtained by the methods of dialectics with its constant regard to the innumerable actions and reactions of life and death, of progressive or retrogressive changes. And in this spirit, the new German philosophy has worked. Kant began his career by resolving the stable Solar system of Newton and its eternal duration, after the famous initial impulse had once been given, into the result of a historical process, the formation of the Sun and all the planets out of a rotating, nebulous mass. From this, he at the same time drew the conclusion that, given this origin of the Solar system, its future death followed by necessity. His theory, half a century later, was established mathematically by Laplace, and half a century after that, the spectroscope proved the existence in space of such incandescent masses of gas in various stages of condensation.

This new German philosophy culminated in the Hegelian system. In this system—and herein is its great merit—for the first time the whole world, natural, historical, intellectual, is represented as a process—i.e., as in constant motion, change, transformation, development; and the attempt is made to trace out the internal connection that makes a continuous whole of

all this movement and development. From this point of view, the history of mankind no longer appeared as a wild whirl of senseless deeds of violence, all equally condemnable at the judgment seat of mature philosophic reason and which are best forgotten as quickly as possible, but as the process of evolution of man himself. It was now the task of the intellect to follow the gradual march of this process through all its devious ways, and to trace out the inner law running through all its apparently accidental phenomena.

That the Hegelian system did not solve the problem it propounded is here immaterial. Its epoch-making merit was that it propounded the problem. This problem is one that no single individual will ever be able to solve. Although Hegel was—with Saint-Simon—the most encyclopedic mind of his time, yet he was limited, first, by the necessary limited extent of his own knowledge and, second, by the limited extent and depth of the knowledge and conceptions of his age. To these limits, a third must be added; Hegel was an idealist. To him, the thoughts within his brain were not the more or less abstract pictures of actual things and processes, but, conversely, things and their evolution were only the realized pictures of the "Idea", existing somewhere from eternity before the world was. This way of thinking turned everything upside down, and completely reversed the actual connection of things in the world. Correctly and ingeniously as many groups of facts were grasped by Hegel, yet, for the reasons just given, there is much that is botched, artificial, labored, in a word, wrong in point of detail. The Hegelian system, in itself, was a colossal miscarriage—but it was also the last of its kind.

It was suffering, in fact, from an internal and incurable contradiction. Upon the one hand, its essential proposition was the conception that human history is a process of evolution, which, by its very nature, cannot find its intellectual final term in the discovery of any so-called absolute truth. But, on the other hand, it laid claim to being the very essence of this absolute truth. A system of natural and historical knowledge, embracing everything, and final for all time, is a contradiction to the fundamental law of dialectic reasoning.

This law, indeed, by no means excludes, but, on the contrary, includes the idea that the systematic knowledge of the external universe can make giant strides from age to age.

The perception of the fundamental contradiction in German idealism led necessarily back to materialism, but—nota bene—not to the simply metaphysical, exclusively mechanical materialism of the 18th century. Old materialism looked upon all previous history as a crude heap of irrationality and violence; modern materialism sees in it the process of evolution of humanity, and aims at discovering the laws thereof. With the French of the 18th century, and even with Hegel, the conception obtained of Nature as a whole—moving in narrow circles, and forever immutable, with its eternal celestial bodies, as Newton, and unalterable organic species, as Linnaeus, taught. Modern materialism embraces the more recent discoveries of natural science, according to which Nature also has its history in time, the celestial bodies, like the organic species that, under favorable conditions, people them, being born and perishing. And even if Nature, as a whole, must still be said to move in recurrent cycles, these cycles assume infinitely larger dimensions. In both aspects, modern materialism is essentially dialectic, and no longer requires the assistance of that sort of philosophy which, queen-like, pretended to rule the remaining mob of sciences. As soon as each special science is bound to make clear its position in the great totality of things and of our knowledge of things, a special science dealing with this totality is superfluous or unnecessary. That which still survives of all earlier philosophy is the science of thought and its law—formal logic and dialectics. Everything else is subsumed in the positive science of Nature and history.

Whilst, however, the revolution in the conception of Nature could only be made in proportion to the corresponding positive materials furnished by research, already much earlier certain historical facts had occurred which led to a decisive change in the conception of history. In 1831, the first working-class rising took place in Lyons; between 1838 and 1842, the first national working-class movement, that of the English Chartists, reached its height. The class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie came to the front in the history of the most advanced countries in Europe, in proportion to the development, upon the one hand, of modern industry, upon the other, of the newly-acquired political supremacy of the bourgeoisie. Facts more and more strenuously gave the lie to the teachings of bourgeois economy as to the identity of the interests of capital and labor, as to the universal harmony and universal prosperity that would be the consequence of

unbridled competition. All these things could no longer be ignored, any more than the French and English Socialism, which was their theoretical, though very imperfect, expression. But the old idealist conception of history, which was not yet dislodged, knew nothing of class struggles based upon economic interests, knew nothing of economic interests; production and all economic relations appeared in it only as incidental, subordinate elements in the "history of civilization".

The new facts made imperative a new examination of *all* past history. Then it was seen that all past history, with the exception of its primitive stages, was the history of class struggles; that these warring classes of society are always the products of the modes of production and of exchange—in a word, of the *economic* conditions of their time; that the economic structure of society always furnishes the real basis, starting from which we can alone work out the ultimate explanation of the whole superstructure of juridical and political institutions as well as of the religious, philosophical, and other ideas of a given historical period. Hegel has freed history from metaphysics —he made it dialectic; but his conception of history was essentially idealistic. But now idealism was driven from its last refuge, the philosophy of history; now a materialistic treatment of history was propounded, and a method found of explaining man's "knowing" by his "being", instead of, as heretofore, his "being" by his "knowing".

From that time forward, Socialism was no longer an accidental discovery of this or that ingenious brain, but the necessary outcome of the struggle between two historically developed classes—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Its task was no longer to manufacture a system of society as perfect as possible, but to examine the historical-economic succession of events from which these classes and their antagonism had of necessity sprung, and to discover in the economic conditions thus created the means of ending the conflict. But the Socialism of earlier days was as incompatible with this materialist conception as the conception of Nature of the French materialists was with dialectics and modern natural science. The Socialism of earlier days certainly criticized the existing capitalist mode of production and its consequences. But it could not explain them, and, therefore, could not get the mastery of them. It could only simply reject them as bad. The more strongly this earlier Socialism denounced the exploitations of the working-class, inevitable under Capitalism, the less able was it clearly to

show in what this exploitation consisted and how it arose, but for this it was necessary—to present the capitalist mode of production in its historical connection and its inevitableness during a particular historical period, and therefore, also, to present its inevitable downfall; and to lay bare its essential character, which was still a secret. This was done by the discovery of *surplus-value.*

It was shown that the appropriation of unpaid labor is the basis of the capitalist mode of production and of the exploitation of the worker that occurs under it; that even if the capitalist buys the labor power of his laborer at its full value as a commodity on the market, he yet extracts more value from it than he paid for; and that in the ultimate analysis, this surplus-value forms those sums of value from which are heaped up constantly increasing masses of capital in the hands of the possessing classes. The genesis of capitalist production and the production of capital were both explained.

These two great discoveries, the materialistic conception of history and the revelation of the secret of capitalist production through surplus-value, we owe to Marx. With these discoveries, Socialism became a science. The next thing was to work out all its details and relations.

Chapter 3: Historical Materialism

The materialist conception of history starts from the proposition that the production of the means to support human life and, next to production, the exchange of things produced, is the basis of all social structure; that in every society that has appeared in history, the manner in which wealth is distributed and society divided into classes or orders is dependent upon what is produced, how it is produced, and how the products are exchanged. From this point of view, the final causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in men's brains, not in men's better insights into eternal truth and justice, but in changes in the modes of production and exchange. They are to be sought, not in the *philosophy* , but in the *economics* of each particular epoch. The growing perception that existing social institutions are unreasonable and unjust, that reason has become unreason, and right wrong, [6] is only proof that in the modes of production and exchange changes have silently taken place with which the social order, adapted to earlier economic conditions, is no longer in keeping. From this it also follows that the means of getting rid of the incongruities that have been brought to light must also be present, in a more or less developed condition, within the changed modes of production themselves. These means are not to be invented by deduction from fundamental principles, but are to be discovered in the stubborn facts of the existing system of production.

What is, then, the position of modern Socialism in this connection?

The present situation of society—this is now pretty generally conceded—is the creation of the ruling class of today, of the bourgeoisie. The mode of production peculiar to the bourgeoisie, known, since Marx, as the capitalist mode of production, was incompatible with the feudal system, with the privileges it conferred upon individuals, entire social ranks and local corporations, as well as with the hereditary ties of subordination which constituted the framework of its social organization. The bourgeoisie broke up the feudal system and built upon its ruins the capitalist order of society, the kingdom of free competition, of personal liberty, of the equality, before the law, of all commodity owners, of all the rest of the capitalist blessings.

From there forward, the capitalist mode of production could develop in freedom. Since steam, machinery, and the making of machines by machinery transformed the older manufacture into modern industry, the productive forces, evolved under the guidance of the bourgeoisie, developed with a rapidity and in a degree unheard of before. But just as the older manufacture, in its time, and handicraft, becoming more developed under its influence, had come into collision with the feudal trammels of the guilds, so now modern industry, in its complete development, comes into collision with the bounds within which the capitalist mode of production holds it confined. The new productive forces have already outgrown the capitalist mode of using them. And this conflict between productive forces and modes of production is not a conflict engendered in the mind of man, like that between original sin and divine justice. It exists, in fact, objectively, outside us, independently of the will and actions even of the men that have brought it on. Modern Socialism is nothing but the reflex, in thought, of this conflict in fact; its ideal reflection in the minds, first, of the class directly suffering under it, the working class.

Now, what does this conflict consist of?

Before capitalist production—i.e., in the Middle Ages—the system of petty industry obtained generally, based upon the private property of the laborers in their means of production; in the country, the agriculture of the small peasant, freeman, or serf; in the towns, the handicrafts organized in guilds. The instruments of labor—land, agricultural implements, the workshop, the tool—were the instruments of labor of single individuals, adapted for the use of one worker, and, therefore, of necessity, small, dwarfish, circumscribed. But, for this very reason, they belonged as a rule to the producer himself. To concentrate these scattered, limited means of production, to enlarge them, to turn them into the powerful levers of production of the present day—this was precisely the historic role of capitalist production and of its upholder, the bourgeoisie. In the fourth section of *Capital* , Marx has explained in detail how since the 15th century this has been historically worked out through the three phases of simple co-operation, manufacture, and modern industry. But the bourgeoisie, as is shown there, could not transform these puny means of production into mighty productive forces without transforming them, at the same time, from means of production of the individual into social means of

production only workable by a collectivity of men. The spinning wheel, the handloom, the blacksmith's hammer, were replaced by the spinning-machine, the power-loom, the steam-hammer; the individual workshop, by the factory implying the co-operation of hundreds and thousands of workmen. In like manner, production itself changed from a series of individual into a series of social acts, and the production from individual to social products. The yarn, the cloth, the metal articles that now come out of the factory were the joint product of many workers, through whose hands they had successively to pass before they were ready. No one person could say of them: "I made that; this is *my* product."

But where, in a given society, the fundamental form of production is that spontaneous division of labor which creeps in gradually and not upon any preconceived plan, there the products take on the form of *commodities* , whose mutual exchange, buying and selling, enable the individual producers to satisfy their manifold wants. And this was the case in the Middle Ages. The peasant, e.g., sold to the artisan agricultural products and bought from him the products of handicraft. Into this society of individual producers, of commodity producers, the new mode of production thrust itself. In the midst of the old division of labor, grown up spontaneously and upon *no definite plan* , which had governed the whole of society, now arose division of labor upon *a definite plan* , as organized in the factory; side by side with *individual* production appeared *social* production. The products of both were sold in the same market, and, therefore, at prices at least approximately equal. But organization upon a definite plan was stronger than spontaneous division of labor. The factories working with the combined social forces of a collectivity of individuals produced their commodities far more cheaply than the individual small producers. Individual producers succumbed in one department after another. Socialized production revolutionized all the old methods of production. But its revolutionary character was, at the same time, so little recognized that it was, on the contrary, introduced as a means of increasing and developing the production of commodities. When it arose, it found ready-made, and made liberal use of, certain machinery for the production and exchange of commodities: merchants' capital, handicraft, wage-labor. Socialized production thus introducing itself as a new form of the production of commodities, it was a matter of course that under it the old forms of

appropriation remained in full swing, and were applied to its products as well.

In the medieval stage of evolution of the production of commodities, the question as to the owner of the product of labor could not arise. The individual producer, as a rule, had, from raw material belonging to himself, and generally his own handiwork, produced it with his own tools, by the labor of his own hands or of his family. There was no need for him to appropriate the new product. It belonged wholly to him, as a matter of course. His property in the product was, therefore, based *upon his own labor* . Even where external help was used, this was, as a rule, of little importance, and very generally was compensated by something other than wages. The apprentices and journeymen of the guilds worked less for board and wages than for education, in order that they might become master craftsmen themselves.

Then came the concentration of the means of production and of the producers in large workshops and manufactories, their transformation into actual socialized means of production and socialized producers. But the socialized producers and means of production and their products were still treated, after this change, just as they had been before—i.e., as the means of production and the products of individuals. Hitherto, the owner of the instruments of labor had himself appropriated the product, because, as a rule, it was his own product and the assistance of others was the exception. Now, the owner of the instruments of labor always appropriated to himself the product, although it was no longer *his* product but exclusively the product of the *labor of others* . Thus, the products now produced socially were not appropriated by those who had actually set in motion the means of production and actually produced the commodities, but by the *capitalists* . The means of production, and production itself, had become in essence socialized. But they were subjected to a form of appropriation which presupposes the private production of individuals, under which, therefore, every one owns his own product and brings it to market. The mode of production is subjected to this form of appropriation, although it abolishes the conditions upon which the latter rests. [7]

This contradiction, which gives to the new mode of production its capitalistic character, *contains the germ of the whole of the social*

antagonisms of today . The greater the mastery obtained by the new mode of production over all important fields of production and in all manufacturing countries, the more it reduced individual production to an insignificant residuum, *the more clearly was brought out the incompatibility of socialized production with capitalistic appropriation* .

The first capitalists found, as we have said, alongside other forms of labor, wage-labor ready-made for them on the market. But it was exceptional, complementary, accessory, transitory wage-labor. The agricultural laborer, though, upon occasion, he hired himself out by the day, had a few acres of his own land on which he could at all events live at a pinch. The guilds were so organized that the journeyman of today became the master of tomorrow. But all this changed, as soon as the means of production became socialized and concentrated in the hands of capitalists. The means of production, as well as the product, of the individual producer became more and more worthless; there was nothing left for him but to turn wage-worker under the capitalist. Wage-labor, aforetime the exception and accessory, now became the rule and basis of all production; aforetime complementary, it now became the sole remaining function of the worker. The wage-worker for a time became a wage-worker for life. The number of these permanent was further enormously increased by the breaking-up of the feudal system that occurred at the same time, by the disbanding of the retainers of the feudal lords, the eviction of the peasants from their homesteads, etc. The separation was made complete between the means of production concentrated in the hands of the capitalists, on the one side, and the producers, possessing nothing but their labor-power, on the other. *The contradiction between socialized production and capitalistic appropriation manifested itself as the antagonism of proletariat and bourgeoisie* .

We have seen that the capitalist mode of production thrust its way into a society of commodity-producers, of individual producers, whose social bond was the exchange of their products. But every society based upon the production of commodities has this peculiarity: that the producers have lost control over their own social inter-relations. Each man produces for himself with such means of production as he may happen to have, and for such exchange as he may require to satisfy his remaining wants. No one knows how much of his particular article is coming on the market, nor how much of it will be wanted. No one knows whether his individual product will meet

an actual demand, whether he will be able to make good his costs of production or even to sell his commodity at all. Anarchy reigns in socialized production.

But the production of commodities, like every other form of production, has its peculiar, inherent laws inseparable from it; and these laws work, despite anarchy, in and through anarchy. They reveal themselves in the only persistent form of social inter-relations—i.e., in exchange—and here they affect the individual producers as compulsory laws of competition. They are, at first, unknown to these producers themselves, and have to be discovered by them gradually and as the result of experience. They work themselves out, therefore, independently of the producers, and in antagonism to them, as inexorable natural laws of their particular form of production. The product governs the producers.

In medieval society, especially in the earlier centuries, production was essentially directed toward satisfying the wants of the individual. It satisfied, in the main, only the wants of the producer and his family. Where relations of personal dependence existed, as in the country, it also helped to satisfy the wants of the feudal lord. In all this there was, therefore, no exchange; the products, consequently, did not assume the character of commodities. The family of the peasant produced almost everything they wanted: clothes and furniture, as well as the means of subsistence. Only when it began to produce more than was sufficient to supply its own wants and the payments in kind to the feudal lords, only then did it also produce commodities. This surplus, thrown into socialized exchange and offered for sale, became commodities.

The artisan in the towns, it is true, had from the first to produce for exchange. But they, also, themselves supplied the greatest part of their individual wants. They had gardens and plots of land. They turned their cattle out into the communal forest, which, also, yielded them timber and firing. The women spun flax, wool, and so forth. Production for the purpose of exchange, production of commodities, was only in its infancy. Hence, exchange was restricted, the market narrow, the methods of production stable; there was local exclusiveness without, local unity within; the mark in the country; in the town, the guild.

But with the extension of the production of commodities, and especially with the introduction of the capitalist mode of production, the laws of commodity-production, hitherto latent, came into action more openly and with greater force. The old bonds were loosened, the old exclusive limits broken through, the producers were more and more turned into independent, isolated producers of commodities. It became apparent that the production of society at large was ruled by absence of plan, by accident, by anarchy; and this anarchy grew to greater and greater heights. But the chief means by aid of which the capitalist mode of production intensified this anarchy of socialized production was the exact opposite of anarchy. It was the increasing organization of production, upon a social basis, in every individual productive establishment. By this, the old, peaceful, stable condition of things was ended. Wherever this organization of production was introduced into a branch of industry, it allowed no other method of production by its side. The field of labor became a battle-ground. The great geographical discoveries, and the colonization following them, multiplied markets and quickened the transformation of handicraft into manufacture. The war did not simply break out between the individual producers of particular localities. The local struggles begat, in their turn, national conflicts, the commercial wars of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Finally, modern industry and the opening of the world-market made the struggle universal, and at the same time gave it an unheard-of virulence. Advantages in natural or artificial conditions of production now decide the existence or non-existence of individual capitalists, as well as of whole industries and countries. He that falls is remorselessly cast aside. It is the Darwinian struggle of the individual for existence transferred from Nature to society with intensified violence. The conditions of existence natural to the animal appear as the final term of human development. The contradiction between socialized production and capitalistic appropriation now presents itself as *an antagonism between the organization of production in the individual workshop and the anarchy of production in society generally* .

The capitalist mode of production moves in these two forms of the antagonism immanent to it from its very origin. It is never able to get out of that "vicious circle" which Fourier had already discovered. What Fourier could not, indeed, see in his time is that this circle is gradually narrowing;

that the movement becomes more and more a spiral, and must come to an end, like the movement of planets, by collision with the center. It is the compelling force of anarchy in the production of society at large that more and more completely turns the great majority of men into proletarians; and it is the masses of the proletariat again who will finally put an end to anarchy in production. It is the compelling force of anarchy in social production that turns the limitless perfectibility of machinery under modern industry into a compulsory law by which every individual industrial capitalist must perfect his machinery more and more, under penalty of ruin.

But the perfecting of machinery is making human labor superfluous. If the introduction and increase of machinery means the displacement of millions of manual-workers by a few machine-workers, improvement in machinery means the displacement of more and more of the machine-workers themselves. It means, in the last instance, the production of a number of available wage workers in excess of the average needs of capital, the formation of a complete industrial reserve army, as I called it in 1845, [8] available at the times when industry is working at high pressure, to be cast out upon the street when the inevitable crash comes, a constant dead weight upon the limbs of the working-class in its struggle for existence with capital, a regulator for keeping wages down to the low level that suits the interests of capital.

Thus it comes about, to quote Marx, that machinery becomes the most powerful weapon in the war of capital against the working-class; that the instruments of labor constantly tear the means of subsistence out of the hands of the laborer; that they very product of the worker is turned into an instrument for his subjugation.

Thus it comes about that the economizing of the instruments of labor becomes at the same time, from the outset, the most reckless waste of labor-power, and robbery based upon the normal conditions under which labor functions; that machinery,

"the most powerful instrument for shortening labor time, becomes the most unfailing means for placing every moment of the laborer's time and that of his family at the disposal of the capitalist for the purpose of expanding the value of his capital." (*Capital* , English edition, p. 406)

Thus it comes about that the overwork of some becomes the preliminary condition for the idleness of others, and that modern industry, which hunts after new consumers all over the whole world, forces the consumption of the masses at home down to a starvation minimum, and in doing thus destroys its own home market.

"The law that always equilibrates the relative surplus- population, or industrial reserve army, to the extent and energy of accumulation, this law rivets the laborer to capital more firmly than the wedges of Vulcan did Prometheus to the rock. It establishes an accumulation of misery, corresponding with the accumulation of capital. Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole, i.e., on the side of the class that produces *its own product in the form of capital* (Marx's *Capital* , p. 661)

And to expect any other division of the products from the capitalist mode of production is the same as expecting the electrodes of a battery not to decompose acidulated water, not to liberate oxygen at the positive, hydrogen at the negative pole, so long as they are connected with the battery.

We have seen that the ever-increasing perfection of modern machinery is, by the anarchy of social production, turned into a compulsory law that forces the individual industrial capitalist always to improve his machinery, always to increase its productive force. The bare possibility of extending the field of production is transformed for him into a similarly compulsory law. The enormous expansive force of modern industry, compared with that of gasses is mere child's play, appears to us now as a *necessity* for expansion, both qualitative and quantitative, that laughs at all resistance. Such resistance is offered by consumption, by sales, by the markets for the products of modern industry. But the capacity for extension, extensive and intensive, of the markets is primarily governed by quite different laws that work much less energetically. The extension of the markets cannot keep pace with the extension of production. The collision becomes inevitable, and as this cannot produce any real solution so long as it does not break in pieces the capitalist mode of production, the collisions become periodic. Capitalist production has begotten another "vicious circle".

As a matter of fact, since 1825, when the first general crisis broke out, the whole industrial and commercial world, production and exchange among all civilized peoples and their more or less barbaric hangers-on, are thrown out of joint about once every 10 years. Commerce is at a stand-still, the markets are glutted, products accumulate, as multitudinous as they are unsaleable, hard cash disappears, credit vanishes, factories are closed, the mass of the workers are in want of the means of subsistence, because they have produced too much of the means of subsistence; bankruptcy follows upon bankruptcy, execution upon execution. The stagnation lasts for years; productive forces and products are wasted and destroyed wholesale, until the accumulated mass of commodities finally filter off, more or less depreciated in value, until production and exchange gradually begin to move again. Little by little, the pace quickens. It becomes a trot. The industrial trot breaks into a canter, the canter in turn grows into the headlong gallop of a perfect steeplechase of industry, commercial credit, and speculation, which finally, after breakneck leaps, ends where it began—in the ditch of a crisis. And so over and over again. We have now, since the year 1825, gone through this five times, and at the present moment (1877), we are going through it for the sixth time. And the character of these crises is so clearly defined that Fourier hit all of them off when he described the first "crise plethorique", a crisis from plethora.

In these crises, the contradiction between socialized production and capitalist appropriation ends in a violent explosion. The circulation of commodities is, for the time being, stopped. Money, the means of circulation, becomes a hindrance to circulation. All the laws of production and circulation of commodities are turned upside down. The economic collision has reached its apogee. *The mode of production is in rebellion against the mode of exchange* .

The fact that the socialized organization of production within the factory has developed so far that it has become incompatible with the anarchy of production in society, which exists side by side with and dominates it, is brought home to the capitalist themselves by the violent concentration of capital that occurs during crises, through the ruin of many large, and a still greater number of small, capitalists. The whole mechanism of the capitalist mode of production breaks down under the pressure of the productive forces, its own creations. It is no longer able to turn all this mass of means

of production into capital. They lie fallow, and for that very reason the industrial reserve army must also lie fallow. Means of production, means of subsistence, available laborers, all the elements of production and of general wealth, are present in abundance. But "abundance becomes the source of distress and want" (Fourier), because it is the very thing that prevents the transformation of the means of production and subsistence into capital. For in capitalistic society, the means of production can only function when they have undergone a preliminary transformation into capital, into the means of exploiting human labor-power. The necessity of this transformation into capital of the means of production and subsistence stands like a ghost between these and the workers. It alone prevents the coming together of the material and personal levers of production; it alone forbids the means of production to function, the workers to work and live. On the one hand, therefore, the capitalist mode of production stands convicted of its own incapacity to further direct these productive forces. On the other hand, these productive forces themselves, with increasing energy, press forward to the removal of the existing contradiction, to the abolition of their quality as capital, to the *practical recognition of their character as social production forces* .

This rebellion of the productive forces, as they grow more and more powerful, against their quality as capital, this stronger and stronger command that their social character shall be recognized, forces the capital class itself to treat them more and more as social productive forces, so far as this is possible under capitalist conditions. The period of industrial high pressure, with its unbounded inflation of credit, not less than the crash itself, by the collapse of great capitalist establishments, tends to bring about that form of the socialization of great masses of the means of production which we meet with in the different kinds of joint-stock companies. Many of these means of production and of distribution are, from the outset, so colossal that, like the railways, they exclude all other forms of capitalist expansion. At a further stage of evolution, this form also becomes insufficient. The producers on a large scale in a particular branch of an industry in a particular country unite in a "Trust", a union for the purpose of regulating production. They determine the total amount to be produced, parcel it out among themselves, and thus enforce the selling price fixed beforehand. But trusts of this kind, as soon as business becomes bad, are

generally liable to break up, and on this very account compel a yet greater concentration of association. The whole of a particular industry is turned into one gigantic joint-stock company; internal competition gives place to the internal monopoly of this one company. This has happened in 1890 with the English alkali production, which is now, after the fusion of 48 large works, in the hands of one company, conducted upon a single plan, and with a capital of 6,000,000 pounds.

In the trusts, freedom of competition changes into its very opposite—into monopoly; and the production without any definite plan of capitalistic society capitulates to the production upon a definite plan of the invading socialistic society. Certainly, this is so far still to the benefit and advantage of the capitalists. But, in this case, the exploitation is so palpable that it must break down. No nation will put up with production conducted by trusts, with so barefaced an exploitation of the community by a small band of dividend-mongers.

In any case, with trusts or without, the official representative of capitalist society—the state—will ultimately have to undertake the direction of production. [9] This necessity for conversion into State property is felt first in the great institutions for intercourse and communication—the post office, the telegraphs, the railways.

If the crises demonstrate the incapacity of the bourgeoisie for managing any longer modern productive forces, the transformation of the great establishments for production and distribution into joint-stock companies, trusts, and State property, show how unnecessary the bourgeoisie are for that purpose. All the social functions of the capitalist has no further social function than that of pocketing dividends, tearing off coupons, and gambling on the Stock Exchange, where the different capitalists despoil one another of their capital. At first, the capitalist mode of production forces out the workers. Now, it forces out the capitalists, and reduces them, just as it reduced the workers, to the ranks of the surplus-population, although not immediately into those of the industrial reserve army.

But, the transformation—either into joint-stock companies and trusts, or into State-ownership—does not do away with the capitalist nature of the productive forces. In the joint-stock companies and trusts, this is obvious.

And the modern State, again, is only the organization that bourgeois society takes on in order to support the external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against the encroachments as well of the workers as of individual capitalists. The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine—the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of productive forces, the more it actually becomes the national capitalist, the more citizens it exploits. The workers remain wage-workers —proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is, rather, brought to a head. But, brought to a head, it topples over. State-ownership of the productive forces is not the solution of the conflict, but concealed within it are the technical conditions that form the elements of that solution.

This solution can only consist in the practical recognition of the social nature of the modern forces of production, and therefore in harmonizing with the socialized character of the means of production. And this can only come about by society openly and directly taking possession of the productive forces which have outgrown all control, except that of society as a whole. The social character of the means of production and of the products today reacts against the producers, periodically disrupting all production and exchange, acts only like a law of Nature working blindly, forcibly, destructively. But,with the taking over by society of the productive forces, the social character of the means of production and of the products will be utilized by the producers with a perfect understanding of its nature, and instead of being a source of disturbance and periodical collapse, will become the most powerful lever of production itself.

Active social forces work exactly like natural forces: blindly, forcibly, destructively, so long as we do not understand, and reckon with, them. But, when once we understand them, when once we grasp their action, their direction, their effects, it depends only upon ourselves to subject them more and more to our own will, and, by means of them, to reach our own ends. And this holds quite especially of the mighty productive forces of today. As long as we obstinately refuse to understand the nature and the character of these social means of action—and this understanding goes against the grain of the capitalist mode of production, and its defenders—so long these forces are at work in spite of us, in opposition to us, so long they master us, as we have shown above in detail.

But when once their nature is understood, they can, in the hands of the producers working together, be transformed from master demons into willing servants. The difference is that between the destructive force of electricity in the lightning in the storm, and electricity under command in the telegraph and the voltaic arc; the difference between a conflagration, and fire working in the service of man. With this recognition, at last, of the real nature of the productive forces of today, the social anarchy of production gives place to a social regulation of production upon a definite plan, according to the needs of the community and of each individual. Then the capitalist mode of appropriation, in which the product enslaves first the producer, and then the appropriator, is replaced by the mode of appropriation of the products that is based upon the nature of the modern means of production; upon the one hand, direct social appropriation, as means to the maintenance and extension of production—on the other, direct individual appropriation, as means of subsistence and of enjoyment.

Whilst the capitalist mode of production more and more completely transforms the great majority of the population into proletarians, it creates the power which, under penalty of its own destruction, is forced to accomplish this revolution. Whilst it forces on more and more of the transformation of the vast means of production, already socialized, into State property, it shows itself the way to accomplishing this revolution. *The proletariat seizes political power and turns the means of production into State property* .

But, in doing this, it abolishes itself as proletariat, abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, and also abolishes the State as State. Society, thus far, based upon class antagonisms, had need of the State. That is, of an organization of the particular class which was, pro tempore, the exploiting class, an organization for the purpose of preventing any interference from without with the existing conditions of production, and, therefore, especially, for the purpose of forcibly keeping the exploited classes in the condition of oppression corresponding with the given mode of production (slavery, serfdom, wage-labor). The State was the official representative of society as a whole; the gathering of it together into a visible embodiment. But, it was this only in so far as it was the State of that class which itself represented, for the time being, society as a whole:

in ancient times, the State of slave owning citizens;
in the Middle Ages, the feudal lords;
in our own times, the bourgeoisie.

When, at last, it becomes the real representative of the whole of society, it renders itself unnecessary. As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection; as soon as class rule, and the individual struggle for existence based upon our present anarchy in production, with the collisions and excesses arising from these, are removed, nothing more remains to be repressed, and a special repressive force, a State, is no longer necessary. The first act by virtue of which the State really constitutes itself the representative of the whole of society—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—this is, at the same time, its last independent act as a State. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies out of itself; the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The State is not "abolished". *It dies out* . This gives the measure of the value of the phrase: "a free State", both as to its justifiable use at times by agitators, and as to its ultimate scientific insufficiency; and also of the demands of the so-called anarchists for the abolition of the State out of hand.

Since the historical appearance of the capitalist mode of production, the appropriation by society of all the means of production has often been dreamed of, more or less vaguely, by individuals, as well as by sects, as the ideal of the future. But it could become possible, could become a historical necessity, only when the actual conditions for its realization were there. Like every other social advance, it becomes practicable, not by men understanding that the existence of classes is in contradiction to justice, equality, etc., not by the mere willingness to abolish these classes, but by virtue of certain new economic conditions. The separation of society into an exploiting and an exploited class, a ruling and an oppressed class, was the necessary consequences of the deficient and restricted development of production in former times. So long as the total social labor only yields a produce which but slightly exceeds that barely necessary for the existence of all; so long, therefore, as labor engages all or almost all the time of the great majority of the members of society—so long, of necessity, this society is divided into classes. Side by side with the great majority, exclusively

bond slaves to labor, arises a class freed from directly productive labor, which looks after the general affairs of society: the direction of labor, State business, law, science, art, etc. It is, therefore, the law of division of labor that lies at the basis of the division into classes. But this does not prevent this division into classes from being carried out by means of violence and robbery, trickery and fraud. It does not prevent the ruling class, once having the upper hand, from consolidating its power at the expense of the working-class, from turning its social leadership into an intensified exploitation of the masses.

But if, upon this showing, division into classes has a certain historical justification, it has this only for a given period, only under given social conditions. It was based upon the insufficiency of production. It will be swept away by the complete development of modern productive forces. And, in fact, the abolition of classes in society presupposes a degree of historical evolution at which the existence, not simply of this or that particular ruling class, but of any ruling class at all, and, therefore, the existence of class distinction itself, has become an obsolete anachronism. It presupposes, therefore, the development of production carried out to a degree at which appropriation of the means of production and of the products, and, with this, of political domination, of the monopoly of culture, and of intellectual leadership by a particular class of society, has become not only superfluous but economically, politically, intellectually, a hindrance to development.

This point is now reached. Their political and intellectual bankruptcy is scarcely any longer a secret to the bourgeoisie themselves. Their economic bankruptcy recurs regularly every 10 years. In every crisis, society is suffocated beneath the weight of its own productive forces and products, which it cannot use, and stands helpless, face-to-face with the absurd contradiction that the producers have nothing to consume, because consumers are wanting. The expansive force of the means of production bursts the bonds that the capitalist mode of production had imposed upon them. Their deliverance from these bonds is the one precondition for an unbroken, constantly-accelerated development of the productive forces, and therewith for a practically unlimited increase of production itself. Nor is this all. The socialized appropriation of the means of production does away, not only with the present artificial restrictions upon production, but also with

the positive waste and devastation of productive forces and products that are at the present time the inevitable concomitants of production, and that reach their height in the crises. Further, it sets free for the community at large a mass of means of production and of products, by doing away with the senseless extravagance of the ruling classes of today, and their political representatives. The possibility of securing for every member of society, by means of socialized production, an existence not only fully sufficient materially, and becoming day-by-day more full, but an existence guaranteeing to all the free development and exercise of their physical and mental faculties—this possibility is now, for the first time, here, but *it is here* . [10]

With the seizing of the means of production by society, production of commodities is done away with, and, simultaneously, the mastery of the product over the producer. Anarchy in social production is replaced by systematic, definite organization. The struggle for individual existence disappears. Then, for the first time, man, in a certain sense, is finally marked off from the rest of the animal kingdom, and emerges from mere animal conditions of existence into really human ones. The whole sphere of the conditions of life which environ man, and which have hitherto ruled man, now comes under the dominion and control of man, who for the first time becomes the real, conscious lord of nature, because he has now become master of his own social organization. The laws of his own social action, hitherto standing face-to-face with man as laws of Nature foreign to, and dominating him, will then be used with full understanding, and so mastered by him. Man's own social organization, hitherto confronting him as a necessity imposed by Nature and history, now becomes the result of his own free action. The extraneous objective forces that have, hitherto, governed history,pass under the control of man himself. Only from that time will man himself, more and more consciously, make his own history—only from that time will the social causes set in movement by him have, in the main and in a constantly growing measure, the results intended by him. It is the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom.

Let us briefly sum up our sketch of historical evolution.

I. Mediaeval Society—Individual production on a small scale. Means of production adapted for individual use; hence primitive, ungainly, petty, dwarfed in action. Production for immediate consumption, either of the producer himself or his feudal lord. Only where an excess of production over this consumption occurs is such excess offered for sale, enters into exchange. Production of commodities, therefore, only in its infancy. But already it contains within itself, in embryo, anarchy in the production of society at large.

II. Capitalist Revolution—transformation of industry, at first be means of simple cooperation and manufacture. Concentration of the means of production, hitherto scattered, into great workshops. As a consequence, their transformation from individual to social means of production—a transformation which does not, on the whole, affect the form of exchange. The old forms of appropriation remain in force. The capitalist appears. In his capacity as owner of the means of production, he also appropriates the products and turns them into commodities. Production has become a *social* act. Exchange and appropriation continue to be *individual* acts, the acts of individuals. The social product is appropriated by the individual capitalist. Fundamental contradiction, whence arise all the contradictions in which our present-day society moves, and which modern industry brings to light.

A. Severance of the producer from the means of production. Condemnation of the worker to wage-labor for life. *Antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.*
B. Growing predominance and increasing effectiveness of the laws governing the production of commodities. Unbridled competition. *Contradiction between socialized organization in the individual factory and social anarchy in the production as a whole.*
C. On the one hand, perfecting of machinery, made by competition compulsory for each individual manufacturer, and complemented by a constantly growing displacement of laborers. *Industrial reserve-army* . On the other hand, unlimited extension of production, also compulsory under competition, for every manufacturer. On both sides, unheard-of development of productive forces, excess of supply over demand, over-production and products—excess there, of laborers, without employment and without means of existence. But these two levers of production and of social well-being are unable to work together, because the capitalist form of

production prevents the productive forces from working and the products from circulating, unless they are first turned into capital—which their very superabundance prevents. The contradiction has grown into an absurdity. *The mode of production rises in rebellion against the form of exchange.*
D. Partial recognition of the social character of the productive forces forced upon the capitalists themselves. Taking over of the great institutions for production and communication, first by joint-stock companies, later by trusts, then by the State. The bourgeoisie demonstrated to be a superfluous class. All its social functions are now performed by salaried employees.

III. Proletarian Revolution—Solution of the contradictions. The proletariat seizes the public power, and by means of this transforms the socialized means of production, slipping from the hands of the bourgeoisie, into public property. By this act, the proletariat frees the means of production from the character of capital they have thus far borne, and gives their socialized character complete freedom to work itself out. Socialized production upon a predetermined plan becomes henceforth possible. The development of production makes the existence of different classes of society thenceforth an anachronism. In proportion as anarchy in social production vanishes, the political authority of the State dies out. Man, at last the master of his own form of social organization, becomes at the same time the lord over Nature, his own master—free.

To accomplish this act of universal emancipation is the historical mission of the modern proletariat. To thoroughly comprehend the historical conditions and thus the very nature of this act, to impart to the now oppressed proletarian class a full knowledge of the conditions and of the meaning of the momentous act it is called upon to accomplish, this is the task of the theoretical expression of the proletarian movement, scientific Socialism.

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[1] This is the passage on the French Revolution:

"Thought, the concept of law, all at once made itself felt, and against this the old scaffolding of wrong could make no stand. In this conception of law, therefore, a constitution has now been established, and henceforth everything must be based upon this. Since the Sun had been in the firmament, and the planets circled around him, the sight had never been seen of man standing upon his head — i.e., on the Idea — and building reality after this image. Anaxagoras first said that the Nous, Reason, rules the world; but now, for the first time, had men come to recognize that the Idea

must rule the mental reality. And this was a magnificent sunrise. All thinking Beings have participated in celebrating this holy day. A sublime emotion swayed men at that time, an enthusiasm of reason pervaded the world, as if now had come the reconciliation of the Divine Principle with the world." [Hegel: "The Philosophy of history", 1840, p. 535]

Is it not high time to set the anti-Socialist law in action against such teachings, subversive and to the common danger, by the late Professor Hegel?

[2] Engels refers here to the works of the utopian Socialists Thomas More (16th century) and Tommaso Campanella (17th century). See *Code de la nature* , Morelly, Paris 1841 and *De la législation, ou principe des lois* , Mably, Amsterdam 1776.

[3] From *The Revolution in Mind and Practice* , p.21, a memorial addressed to all the "red Republicans, Communists and Socialists of Europe," and sent to the provisional government of France, 1848, and also "to Queen Victoria and her responsible advisers."

[4] Unknown to the Western world until the 20th-century, the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu was a predecessor of or possibly contemporary to Heraclitus. Lao Tzu wrote the renowned *Tao Te Ching* in which he also espouses the fundamental principles of dialectics.

[5] The Alexandrian period of the development of science comprises the period extending from the 3rd century B.C. to the 17th century A.D. It derives its name from the town of Alexandria in Egypt, which was one of the most important centers of international economic intercourses at that time. In the Alexandrian period, mathematics (Euclid and Archimedes), geography, astronomy, anatomy, physiology, etc., attained considerable development.

China also began development in natural sciences in the third century B.C.E.

[6] Mephistopheles in Goethe's *Faust*

[7] It is hardly necessary in this connection to point out that, even if the form of appropriation remains the same, the *character* of the appropriation is just as much revolutionized as production is by the changes described above. It is, of course, a very different matter whether I appropriate to myself my own product or that of another. Note in passing that wage-labor, which contains the whole capitalist mode of production in embryo, is very ancient; in a sporadic, scattered form, it existed for centuries alongside slave-labor. But the embryo could duly develop into the capitalist mode of production only when the necessary historical pre-conditions had been furnished.

[8] "The Conditions of the Working-Class in England"—Sonnenschein & Co., p. 84.

[9] I say "have to". For only when the means of production and distribution have *actually* outgrown the form of management by joint-stock companies, and when, therefore, the taking them over by the State has become *economically* inevitable, only then—even if it is the State of today that affects this—is there an economic advance, the attainment of another step preliminary to the taking over of all productive forces by society itself. But of late, since Bismarck went in for State-ownership of industrial establishments, a kind of spurious Socialism has arisen, degenerating, now and again,

into something of flunkyism, that without more ado declares *all* State-ownership, even of the Bismarkian sort, to be socialistic. Certainly, if the taking over by the State of the tobacco industry is socialistic, then Napoleon and Metternich must be numbered among the founders of Socialism.

If the Belgian State, for quite ordinary political and financial reasons, itself constructed its chief railway lines; if Bismarck, not under any economic compulsion, took over for the State the chief Prussian lines, simply to be the better able to have them in hand in case of war, to bring up the railway employees as voting cattle for the Government, and especially to create for himself a new source of income independent of parliamentary votes—this was, in no sense, a socialistic measure, directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously. Otherwise, the Royal Maritime Company, the Royal porcelain manufacture, and even the regimental tailor of the army would also be socialistic institutions, or even, as was seriously proposed by a sly dog in Frederick William III's reign, the taking over by the State of the brothels.

[10] A few figures may serve to give an approximate idea of the enormous expansive force of the modern means of production, even under capitalist pressure. According to Mr. Giffen, the total wealth of Great Britain and Ireland amounted, in round numbers in: 1814 to £2,200,000,000; 1865 to £6,100,000,000; 1875 to £8,500,000,000. As an instance of the squandering of means of production and of products during a crisis, the total loss in the German iron industry alone, in the crisis of 1873-78, was given at the second German Industrial Congress (Berlin, February 21, 1878), as 22,750,000 pounds.

Critique of the Gotha Programme

by Karl Marx, 1875

Introduction

Critique of the Gotha Programme is a critique of the draft programme of the United Workers' Party of Germany. In this document Marx addresses the dictatorship of the proletariat, the period of transition from capitalism to communism, the two phases of communist society, the production and distribution of the social goods, proletarian internationalism, and the party of the working class.

Lenin later wrote:

The great significance of Marx's explanation is that, here too, he consistently applies materialist dialectics, the theory of development, and regards communism as something which develops *out of* capitalism. Instead of scholastically invented, 'concocted' definitions and fruitless disputes over words (What is socialism? What is communism?), Marx gives analysis of what might be called the stages of the economic maturity of communism. (Lenin Collected Works, Volume 25, p. 471)

Engels wrote a foreword when the document was first published in 1891. Together with the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* Engels published Marx's letter to Bracke , directly bound up with the work.

Section I

1. *Labor is the source of wealth and all culture, and since useful labor is possible only in society and through society, the proceeds of labor belong undiminished with equal right to all members of society.*

First part of the paragraph : "Labor is the source of all wealth and all culture."

Labor is *not the source* of all wealth. *Nature* is just as much the source of use values (and it is surely of such that material wealth consists!) as labor, which itself is only the manifestation of a force of nature, human labor power. The above phrase is to be found in all children's primers and is correct insofar as it is implied that labor is performed with the needed subjects and instruments. But a socialist program cannot allow such bourgeois phrases to pass over in silence the *conditions* that alone give them meaning. And insofar as man from the beginning behaves toward nature, the primary source of all instruments and subjects of labor, as an owner, treats her as belonging to him, his labor becomes the source of use values, therefore also of wealth. The bourgeois have very good grounds for falsely ascribing *supernatural creative power* to labor; since precisely from the fact that labor depends on nature it follows that the man who possesses no other property than his labor power must, in all conditions of society and culture, be the slave of other men who have made themselves the owners of the material conditions of labor. He can only work with their permission, hence live only with their permission.

Let us now leave the sentence as it stands, or rather limps. What could one have expected in conclusion? Obviously this:

"Since labor is the source of all wealth, no one in society can appropriate wealth except as the product of labor. Therefore, if he himself does not work, he lives by the labor of others and also acquires his culture at the expense of the labor of others."

Instead of this, by means of the verbal river "and since", a proposition is added in order to draw a conclusion from this and not from the first one.

Second part of the paragraph : "Useful labor is possible only in society and through society."

According to the first proposition, labor was the source of all wealth and all culture; therefore no society is possible without labor. Now we learn, conversely, that no "useful" labor is possible without society.

One could just as well have said that only in society can useless and even socially harmful labor become a branch of gainful occupation, that only in society can one live by being idle, etc., etc.—in short, one could just as well have copied the whole of Rousseau.

And what is "useful" labor? Surely only labor which produces the intended useful result. A savage—and man was a savage after he had ceased to be an ape—who kills an animal with a stone, who collects fruit, etc., performs "useful" labor.

Thirdly, the conclusion : "Useful labor is possible only in society and through society, the proceeds of labor belong undiminished with equal right to all members of society."

A fine conclusion! If useful labor is possible only in society and through society, the proceeds of labor belong to society—and only so much therefrom accrues to the individual worker as is not required to maintain the "condition" of labor, society.

In fact, this proposition has at all times been made use of by the champions of the *state of society prevailing at any given time* . First comes the claims of the government and everything that sticks to it, since it is the social organ for the maintenance of the social order; then comes the claims of the

various kinds of private property, for the various kinds of private property are the foundations of society, etc. One sees that such hollow phrases are the foundations of society, etc. One sees that such hollow phrases can be twisted and turned as desired.

The first and second parts of the paragraph have some intelligible connection only in the following wording:

"Labor becomes the source of wealth and culture only as social labor", or, what is the same thing, "in and through society".

This proposition is incontestably correct, for although isolated labor (its material conditions presupposed) can create use value, it can create neither wealth nor culture.

But equally incontestable is this other proposition:

"In proportion as labor develops socially, and becomes thereby a source of wealth and culture, poverty and destitution develop among the workers, and wealth and culture among the nonworkers."

This is the law of all history hitherto. What, therefore, had to be done here, instead of setting down general phrases about "labor" and "society", was to prove concretely how in present capitalist society the material, etc., conditions have at last been created which enable and compel the workers to lift this social curse.

In fact, however, the whole paragraph, bungled in style and content, is only there in order to inscribe the Lassallean catchword of the "undiminished proceeds of labor" as a slogan at the top of the party banner. I shall return later to the "proceeds of labor", "equal right", etc., since the same thing recurs in a somewhat different form further on.

2. *In present-day society, the instruments of labor are the monopoly of the capitalist class; the resulting dependence of the working class is the cause of misery and servitude in all forms.*

This sentence, borrowed from the Rules of the International, is incorrect in this "improved" edition.

In present-day society, the instruments of labor are the monopoly of the landowners (the monopoly of property in land is even the basis of the monopoly of capital) *and* the capitalists. In the passage in question, the Rules of the International do not mention either one or the other class of monopolists. They speak of the "monopolizer of the means of labor, that is, *the sources of life* ." The addition, "sources of life", makes it sufficiently clear that land is included in the instruments of labor.

The correction was introduced because Lassalle, for reasons now generally known, attacked *only* the capitalist class and not the landowners. In England, the capitalist class is usually not even the owner of the land on which his factory stands.

3. *The emancipation of labor demands the promotion of the instruments of labor to the common property of society and the cooperative regulation of the total labor, with a fair distribution of the proceeds of labor.*

"Promotion of the instruments of labor to the common property" ought obviously to read their "conversion into the common property"; but this is only passing.

What are the "proceeds of labor"? The product of labor, or its value? And in the latter case, is it the total value of the product, or only that part of the value which labor has newly added to the value of the means of production consumed?

"Proceeds of labor" is a loose notion which Lassalle has put in the place of definite economic conceptions.

What is "a fair distribution"?

Do not the bourgeois assert that the present-day distribution is "fair"? And is it not, in fact, the only "fair" distribution on the basis of the present-day mode of production? Are economic relations regulated by legal conceptions, or do not, on the contrary, legal relations arise out of economic ones? Have not also the socialist sectarians the most varied notions about "fair" distribution?

To understand what is implied in this connection by the phrase "fair distribution", we must take the first paragraph and this one together. The latter presupposes a society wherein the instruments of labor are common property and the total labor is cooperatively regulated, and from the first paragraph we learn that "the proceeds of labor belong undiminished with equal right to all members of society."

"To all members of society"? To those who do not work as well? What remains then of the "undiminished" proceeds of labor? Only to those members of society who work? What remains then of the "equal right" of all members of society?

But "all members of society" and "equal rights" are obviously mere phrases. The kernel consists in this, that in this communist society every worker must receive the "undiminished" Lassallean "proceeds of labor".

Let us take, first of all, the words "proceeds of labor" in the sense of the product of labor; then the cooperative proceeds of labor are the *total social product* .

From this must now be deducted: *First* , cover for replacement of the means of production used up. *Second* , additional portion for expansion of production. *Third* , reserve or insurance funds to provide against accidents, dislocations caused by natural calamities, etc.

These deductions from the "undiminished" proceeds of labor are an economic necessity, and their magnitude is to be determined according to available means and forces, and partly by computation of probabilities, but they are in no way calculable by equity.

There remains the other part of the total product, intended to serve as means of consumption.

Before this is divided among the individuals, there has to be deducted again, from it: *First* , the general costs of administration not belonging to production. This part will, from the outset, be very considerably restricted in comparison with present-day society, and it diminishes in proportion as the new society develops. *Second* , that which is intended for the common satisfaction of needs, such as schools, health services, etc. From the outset, this part grows considerably in comparison with present-day society, and it grows in proportion as the new society develops. *Third* , funds for those unable to work, etc., in short, for what is included under so-called official poor relief today.

Only now do we come to the "distribution" which the program, under Lassallean influence, alone has in view in its narrow fashion—namely, to that part of the means of consumption which is divided among the individual producers of the cooperative society.

The "undiminished" proceeds of labor have already unnoticeably become converted into the "diminished" proceeds, although what the producer is deprived of in his capacity as a private individual benefits him directly or indirectly in his capacity as a member of society.

Just as the phrase of the "undiminished" proceeds of labor has disappeared, so now does the phrase of the "proceeds of labor" disappear altogether.

Within the cooperative society based on common ownership of the means of production, the producers do not exchange their products; just as little

does the labor employed on the products appear here as the *value* of these products, as a material quality possessed by them, since now, in contrast to capitalist society, individual labor no longer exists in an indirect fashion but directly as a component part of total labor. The phrase "proceeds of labor", objectionable also today on account of its ambiguity, thus loses all meaning.

What we have to deal with here is a communist society, not as it has *developed* on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it *emerges* from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally, and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerges. Accordingly, the individual producer receives back from society—after the deductions have been made—exactly what he gives to it. What he has given to it is his individual quantum of labor. For example, the social working day consists of the sum of the individual hours of work; the individual labor time of the individual producer is the part of the social working day contributed by him, his share in it. He receives a certificate from society that he has furnished such-and-such an amount of labor (after deducting his labor for the common funds); and with this certificate, he draws from the social stock of means of consumption as much as the same amount of labor cost. The same amount of labor which he has given to society in one form, he receives back in another.

Here, obviously, the same principle prevails as that which regulates the exchange of commodities, as far as this is exchange of equal values. Content and form are changed, because under the altered circumstances no one can give anything except his labor, and because, on the other hand, nothing can pass to the ownership of individuals, except individual means of consumption. But as far as the distribution of the latter among the individual producers is concerned, the same principle prevails as in the exchange of commodity equivalents: a given amount of labor in one form is exchanged for an equal amount of labor in another form.

Hence, *equal right* here is still in principle— *bourgeois right* , although principle and practice are no longer at loggerheads, while the exchange of

equivalents in commodity exchange exists only on the average and not in the individual case.

In spite of this advance, this equal right is still constantly stigmatized by a bourgeois limitation. The right of the producers is *proportional* to the labor they supply; the equality consists in the fact that measurement is made with an *equal standard* , labor.

But one man is superior to another physically, or mentally, and supplies more labor in the same time, or can labor for a longer time; and labor, to serve as a measure, must be defined by its duration or intensity, otherwise it ceases to be a standard of measurement. This *equal* right is an unequal right for unequal labor. It recognizes no class differences, because everyone is only a worker like everyone else; but it tacitly recognizes unequal individual endowment, and thus productive capacity, as a natural privilege. It is, therefore, a right of inequality, in its content, like every right. Right, by its very nature, can consist only in the application of an equal standard; but unequal individuals (and they would not be different individuals if they were not unequal) are measurable only by an equal standard insofar as they are brought under an equal point of view, are taken from one definite side only—for instance, in the present case, are regarded *only as workers* and nothing more is seen in them, everything else being ignored. Further, one worker is married, another is not; one has more children than another, and so on and so forth. Thus, with an equal performance of labor, and hence an equal in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, one will be richer than another, and so on. To avoid all these defects, right, instead of being equal, would have to be unequal.

But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged after prolonged birth pangs from capitalist society. Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby.

In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labor, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished; after labor has become

not only a means of life but life's prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-around development of the individual, and all the springs of cooperative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!

I have dealt more at length with the "undiminished" proceeds of labor, on the one hand, and with "equal right" and "fair distribution", on the other, in order to show what a crime it is to attempt, on the one hand, to force on our Party again, as dogmas, ideas which in a certain period had some meaning but have now become obsolete verbal rubbish, while again perverting, on the other, the realistic outlook, which it cost so much effort to instill into the Party but which has now taken root in it, by means of ideological nonsense about right and other trash so common among the democrats and French socialists.

Quite apart from the analysis so far given, it was in general a mistake to make a fuss about so-called distribution and put the principal stress on it.

Any distribution, whatever of the means of consumption, is only a consequence of the distribution of the conditions of production themselves. The latter distribution, however, is a feature of the mode of production itself. The capitalist mode of production, for example, rests on the fact that the material conditions of production are in the hands of nonworkers in the form of property in capital and land, while the masses are only owners of the personal condition of production, of labor power. If the elements of production are so distributed, then the present-day distribution of the means of consumption results automatically. If the material conditions of production are the cooperative property of the workers themselves, then there likewise results a distribution of the means of consumption different from the present one. Vulgar socialism (and from it in turn a section of the democrats) has taken over from the bourgeois economists the consideration and treatment of distribution as independent of the mode of production and hence the presentation of socialism as turning principally on distribution. After the real relation has long been made clear, why retrogress again?

4. *The emancipation of labor must be the work of the working class, relative to which all other classes are only one reactionary mass.*

The first strophe is taken from the introductory words of the Rules of the International, but "improved". There it is said: "The emancipation of the working class must be the act of the workers themselves"; here, on the contrary, the "working class" has to emancipate—what? "Labor." Let him understand who can.

In compensation, the antistrophe, on the other hand, is a Lassallean quotation of the first water: "relative to which" (the working class) "all other classes are only one reactionary mass."

In the *Communist Manifesto* it is said:

"Of all the classes that stand face-to-face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product."

The bourgeoisie is here conceived as a revolutionary class—as the bearer of large-scale industry—relative to the feudal lords and the lower middle class, who desire to maintain all social positions that are the creation of obsolete modes of production. Thus, they do not form together with the bourgeoisie "only one reactionary mass".

On the other hand, the proletariat is revolutionary relative to the bourgeoisie because, having itself grown up on the basis of large-scale industry, it strives to strip off from production the capitalist character that the bourgeoisie seeks to perpetuate. But the *Manifesto* adds that the "lower middle class" is becoming revolutionary "in view of [its] impending transfer to the proletariat".

From this point of view, therefore, it is again nonsense to say that it, together with the bourgeoisie, and with the feudal lords into the bargain, "form only one reactionary mass" relative to the working class.

Has one proclaimed to the artisan, small manufacturers, etc., and peasants during the last elections: Relative to us, you, together with the bourgeoisie and feudal lords, form one reactionary mass?

Lassalle knew the *Communist Manifesto* by heart, as his faithful followers know the gospels written by him. If, therefore, he has falsified it so grossly, this has occurred only to put a good color on his alliance with absolutist and feudal opponents against the bourgeoisie.

In the above paragraph, moreover, his oracular saying is dragged in by main force without any connection with the botched quotation from the Rules of the International. Thus, it is simply an impertinence, and indeed not at all displeasing to Herr Bismarck, one of those cheap pieces of insolence in which the Marat of Berlin deals. [Marat of Berlin a reference to Hasselmann, chief editor of the *Neuer Social-Demokrat*]

5. *The working class strives for its emancipation first of all within the framework of the present-day national states, conscious that the necessary result of its efforts, which are common to the workers of all civilized countries, will be the international brotherhood of peoples.*

Lassalle, in opposition to the *Communist Manifesto* and to all earlier socialism, conceived the workers' movement from the narrowest national standpoint. He is being followed in this—and that after the work of the International!

It is altogether self-evident that, to be able to fight at all, the working class must organize itself at home *as a class* and that its own country is the immediate arena of its struggle—insofar as its class struggle is national, not in substance, but, as the *Communist Manifesto* says, "in form". But the "framework of the present-day national state", for instance, the German

Empire, is itself, in its turn, economically "within the framework" of the world market, politically "within the framework" of the system of states. Every businessman knows that German trade is at the same time foreign trade, and the greatness of Herr Bismarck consists, to be sure, precisely in his pursuing a kind of *international* policy.

And to what extent does the German Workers' party reduce its internationalism? To the consciousness that the result of its efforts will be "the international brotherhood of peoples"—a phrase borrowed from the bourgeois League of Peace and Freedom , which is intended to pass as equivalent to the international brotherhood of working classes in the joint struggle against the ruling classes and their governments. Not a word, therefore, about the international functions of the German working class! And it is thus, that it is to challenge its own bourgeoisie—which is already linked up in brotherhood against it with the bourgeois of all other countries —and Herr Bismarck's international policy of conspiracy.

In fact, the internationalism of the program stands *even infinitely below* that of the Free Trade party. The latter also asserts that the result of its efforts will be "the international brotherhood of peoples". But it also *does* something to make trade international and by no means contents itself with the consciousness that all people are carrying on trade at home.

The international activity of the working classes does not in any way depend on the existence of the International Working Men's Association. This was only the first attempt to create a central organ for the activity; an attempt which was a lasting success on account of the impulse which it gave but which was no longer realizable in its historical form after the fall of the Paris Commune.

Bismarck's *Norddeutsche* was absolutely right when it announced, to the satisfaction of its master, that the German Workers' party had sworn off internationalism in the new program.

Section II

Starting from these basic principles, the German workers' party strives by all legal means for the free state—and—socialist society: that abolition of the wage system together with the iron law of wages—and—exploitation in every form; the elimination of all social and political inequality.

I shall return to the "free" state later.

So, in future, the German Workers' party has got to believe in Lassalle's "iron law of wages"! That this may not be lost, the nonsense is perpetrated by speaking of the "abolition of the wage system" (it should read: system of wage labor), "together with the iron law of wages". If I abolish wage labor, then naturally I abolish its laws also, whether they are of "iron" or sponge. But Lassalle's attack on wage labor turns almost solely on this so-called law. In order, therefore, to prove that Lassalle's sect has conquered, the "wage system" must be abolished "together with the iron law of wages" and not without it.

It is well known that nothing of the "iron law of wages" is Lassalle's except the word "iron" borrowed from Goethe's "great, eternal iron laws". [1] The word "iron" is a label by which the true believers recognize one another. But if I take the law with Lassalle's stamp on it, and consequently in his sense, then I must also take it with his substantiation for it. And what is that? As Lange already showed, shortly after Lassalle's death, it is the Malthusian theory of population (preached by Lange himself). But if this theory is correct, then again I cannot abolish the law even if I abolish wage labor a hundred times over, because the law then governs not only the system of wage labor but *every* social system. Basing themselves directly on this, the economists have been proving for 50 years and more that socialism cannot abolish poverty, which has its basis in nature, but can only make it *general* , distribute it simultaneously over the whole surface of society!

But all this is not the main thing. Quite apart from the false Lassallean formulation of the law, the truly outrageous retrogression consists in the following:

Since Lassalle's death, there has asserted itself in our party the scientific understanding that wages are not what they appear to be — namely, the *value* , or *price* , of *labor* —but only a masked form for the *value* , or *price* , of *labor power* . Thereby, the whole bourgeois conception of wages hitherto, as well as all the criticism hitherto directed against this conception, was thrown overboard once and for all. It was made clear that the wage worker has permission to work for his own subsistence—that is, *to live* , only insofar as he works for a certain time gratis for the capitalist (and hence also for the latter's co-consumers of surplus value); that the whole capitalist system of production turns on the increase of this gratis labor by extending the working day, or by developing the productivity—that is, increasing the intensity or labor power, etc.; that, consequently, the system of wage labor is a system of slavery, and indeed of a slavery which becomes more severe in proportion as the social productive forces of labor develop, whether the worker receives better or worse payment. And after this understanding has gained more and more ground in our party, some return to Lassalle's dogma although they must have known that Lassalle *did not know* what wages were, but, following in the wake of the bourgeois economists, took the appearance for the essence of the matter.

It is as if, among slaves who have at last got behind the secret of slavery and broken out in rebellion, a slave still in thrall to obsolete notions were to inscribe on the program of the rebellion: Slavery must be abolished because the feeding of slaves in the system of slavery cannot exceed a certain low maximum!

Does not the mere fact that the representatives of our party were capable of perpetrating such a monstrous attack on the understanding that has spread among the mass of our party prove, by itself, with what criminal levity and with what lack of conscience they set to work in drawing up this compromise program!

Instead of the indefinite concluding phrase of the paragraph, "the elimination of all social and political inequality", it ought to have been said that with the abolition of class distinctions all social and political inequality arising from them would disappear of itself.

Section III

The German Workers' party, in order to pave the way to the solution of the social question , demands the establishment of producers' cooperative societies with state aid under the democratic control of the toiling people . The producers' cooperative societies are to be called into being for industry and agriculture on such a scale that the socialist organization of the total labor will arise from them .

After the Lassallean "iron law of wages", the physic of the prophet. The way to it is "paved" in worthy fashion. In place of the existing class struggle appears a newspaper scribbler's phrase: "the social *question* ", to the "solution" of which one "paves the way".

Instead of arising from the revolutionary process of transformation of society, the "socialist organization of the total labor" "arises" from the "state aid" that the state gives to the producers' cooperative societies and which the *state* , not the workers, "calls into being". It is worthy of Lassalle's imagination that with state loans one can build a new society just as well as a new railway!

From the remnants of a sense of shame, "state aid" has been put — under the democratic control of the "toiling people".

In the first place, the majority of the "toiling people" in Germany consists of peasants, not proletarians.

Second, "democratic" means in German "Volksherrschaftlich" [by the rule of the people] . But what does "control by the rule of the people of the toiling people" mean? And particularly in the case of a toiling people which, through these demands that it puts to the state, expresses its full consciousness that it neither rules nor is ripe for ruling!

It would be superfluous to deal here with the criticism of the recipe prescribed by Buchez in the reign of Louis Philippe, in opposition to the French socialists and accepted by the reactionary workers of *L' Atelier* . The chief offense does not lie in having inscribed this specific nostrum in the program, but in taking, in general, a retrograde step from the standpoint of a class movement to that of a sectarian movement.

That the workers desire to establish the conditions for cooperative production on a social scale, and first of all on a national scale, in their own country, only means that they are working to revolutionize the present conditions of production, and it has nothing in common with the foundation of cooperative societies with state aid. But as far as the present cooperative societies are concerned, they are of value *only* insofar as they are the independent creations of the workers and not protégés either of the governments or of the bourgeois.

Section IV

I come now to the democratic section.

A. The free basis of the state.

First of all, according to II, the German Workers' party strives for "the free state". Free state—what is this?

It is by no means the aim of the workers, who have got rid of the narrow mentality of humble subjects, to set the state free. In the German Empire, the "state" is almost as "free" as in Russia. Freedom consists in converting the state from an organ superimposed upon society into one completely subordinate to it; and today, too, the forms of state are more free or less free to the extent that they restrict the "freedom of the state".

The German Workers' party—at least if it adopts the program—shows that its socialist ideas are not even skin-deep; in that, instead of treating existing society (and this holds good for any future one) as the *basis* of the existing state (or of the future state in the case of future society), it treats the state rather as an independent entity that possesses its own intellectual, ethical, and libertarian bases.

And what of the riotous misuse which the program makes of the words "present-day state", "present-day society", and of the still more riotous misconception it creates in regard to the state to which it addresses its demands?

"Present-day society" is capitalist society, which exists in all civilized countries, more or less free from medieval admixture, more or less modified by the particular historical development of each country, more or less developed. On the other hand, the "present-day state" changes with a country's frontier. It is different in the Prusso-German Empire from what it

is in Switzerland, and different in England from what it is in the United States. The "present-day state" is therefore a fiction.

Nevertheless, the different states of the different civilized countries, in spite of their motley diversity of form, all have this in common: that they are based on modern bourgeois society, only one more or less capitalistically developed. They have, therefore, also certain essential characteristics in common. In this sense, it is possible to speak of the "present-day state" in contrast with the future, in which its present root, bourgeois society, will have died off.

The question then arises: What transformation will the state undergo in communist society? In other words, what social functions will remain in existence there that are analogous to present state functions? This question can only be answered scientifically, and one does not get a flea-hop nearer to the problem by a thousand-fold combination of the word 'people' with the word 'state'.

Between capitalist and communist society there lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat* .

Now the program does not deal with this nor with the future state of communist society.

Its political demands contain nothing beyond the old democratic litany familiar to all: universal suffrage, direct legislation, popular rights, a people's militia, etc. They are a mere echo of the bourgeois People's party , of the League of Peace and Freedom . They are all demands which, insofar as they are not exaggerated in fantastic presentation, have already been *realized* . Only the state to which they belong does not lie within the borders of the German Empire, but in Switzerland, the United States, etc. This sort of "state of the future" is a present-day state, although existing outside the "framework" of the German Empire.

But one thing has been forgotten. Since the German Workers' party expressly declares that it acts within "the present-day national state", hence within its own state, the Prusso-German Empire—its demands would indeed be otherwise largely meaningless, since one only demands what one has not got—it should not have forgotten the chief thing, namely, that all those pretty little gewgaws rest on the recognition of the so-called sovereignty of the people and hence are appropriate only in a *democratic republic* .

Since one has not the courage—and wisely so, for the circumstances demand caution—to demand the democratic republic, as the French workers' programs under Louis Philippe and under Louis Napoleon did, one should not have resorted, either, to the subterfuge, neither "honest" [2] nor decent, of demanding things which have meaning only in a democratic republic from a state which is nothing but a police-guarded military despotism, embellished with parliamentary forms, alloyed with a feudal admixture, already influenced by the bourgeoisie, and bureaucratically carpentered, and then to assure this state into the bargain that one imagines one will be able to force such things upon it "by legal means".

Even vulgar democracy, which sees the millennium in the democratic republic, and has no suspicion that it is precisely in this last form of state of bourgeois society that the class struggle has to be fought out to a conclusion —even it towers mountains above this kind of democratism, which keeps within the limits of what is permitted by the police and not permitted by logic.

That, in fact, by the word "state" is meant the government machine, or the state insofar as it forms a special organism separated from society through division of labor, is shown by the words "the German Workers' party demands as the economic basis of the state: a single progressive income tax", etc. Taxes are the economic basis of the government machinery and of nothing else. In the state of the future, existing in Switzerland, this demand has been pretty well fulfilled. Income tax presupposes various sources of income of the various social classes, and hence capitalist society. It is,

therefore, nothing remarkable that the Liverpool financial reformers—bourgeois headed by Gladstone's brother—are putting forward the same demand as the program.

B. *The German Workers' party demands for the intellectual and ethical basis of the state:* ***1.*** *Universal and equal elementary education by the state. Universal compulsory school attendance. Free instruction.*

"Equal elementary education"? What idea lies behind these words? Is it believed that in present-day society (and it is only with this one has to deal) education can be *equal* for all classes? Or is it demanded that the upper classes also shall be compulsorily reduced to the modicum of education—the elementary school—that alone is compatible with the economic conditions not only of the wage-workers but of the peasants as well?

"Universal compulsory school attendance. Free instruction." The former exists even in Germany, the second in Switzerland and in the United States in the case of elementary schools. If in some states of the latter country higher education institutions are also "free", that only means in fact defraying the cost of education of the upper classes from the general tax receipts. Incidentally, the same holds good for "free administration of justice" demanded under A, 5. The administration of criminal justice is to be free everywhere; that of civil justice is concerned almost exclusively with conflicts over property and hence affects almost exclusively the possessing classes. Are they to carry on their litigation at the expense of the national coffers?

This paragraph on the schools should at least have demanded technical schools (theoretical and practical) in combination with the elementary school.

"Elementary education by the state" is altogether objectionable. Defining by a general law the expenditures on the elementary schools, the qualifications of the teaching staff, the branches of instruction, etc., and, as is done in the United States, supervising the fulfillment of these legal specifications by state inspectors, is a very different thing from appointing the state as the

educator of the people! Government and church should rather be equally excluded from any influence on the school. Particularly, indeed, in the Prusso-German Empire (and one should not take refuge in the rotten subterfuge that one is speaking of a "state of the future"; we have seen how matters stand in this respect) the state has need, on the contrary, of a very stern education by the people.

But the whole program, for all its democratic clang, is tainted through and through by the Lassallean sect's servile belief in the state, or, what is no better, by a democratic belief in miracles; or rather it is a compromise between these two kinds of belief in miracles, both equally remote from socialism.

"Freedom of science" says a paragraph of the Prussian Constitution. Why, then, here?

"Freedom of conscience"! If one desired, at this time of the Kulturkampf, to remind liberalism of its old catchwords, it surely could have been done only in the following form: Everyone should be able to attend his religious as well as his bodily needs without the police sticking their noses in. But the Workers' party ought, at any rate in this connection, to have expressed its awareness of the fact that bourgeois "freedom of conscience" is nothing but the toleration of all possible kinds of religious freedom of conscience, and that for its part it endeavors rather to liberate the conscience from the witchery of religion. But one chooses not to transgress the "bourgeois" level.

I have now come to the end, for the appendix that now follows in the program does not constitute a characteristic component part of it. Hence, I can be very brief.

2. *Normal working day.*

In no other country has the workers' party limited itself to such an indefinite demand, but has always fixed the length of the working day that it considers

normal under the given circumstances.

3. *Restriction of female labor and prohibition of child labor.*

The standardization of the working day must include the restriction of female labor, insofar as it relates to the duration, intermissions, etc., of the working day; otherwise, it could only mean the exclusion of female labor from branches of industry that are especially unhealthy for the female body, or are objectionable morally for the female sex. If that is what was meant, it should have been said so.

"Prohibition of child labor." Here it was absolutely essential to state the age limit.

A general prohibition of child labor is incompatible with the existence of large-scale industry and hence an empty, pious wish. Its realization — if it were possible — would be reactionary, since, with a strict regulation of the working time according to the different age groups and other safety measures for the protection of children, an early combination of productive labor with education is one of the most potent means for the transformation of present-day society.

4. *State supervision of factory, workshop, and domestic industry.*

In consideration of the Prusso-German state, it should definitely have been demanded that the inspectors are to be removable only by a court of law; that any worker can have them prosecuted for neglect of duty; that they must belong to the medical profession.

5. *Regulation of prison labor.*

A petty demand in a general workers' program. In any case, it should have been clearly stated that there is no intention from fear of competition to allow ordinary criminals to be treated like beasts, and especially that there is no desire to deprive them of their sole means of betterment, productive labor. This was surely the least one might have expected from socialists.

6. *An effective liability law.*

It should have been stated what is meant by an "effective" liability law. Be it noted, incidentally, that, in speaking of the normal working day, the part of factory legislation that deals with health regulations and safety measures, etc., has been overlooked. The liability law comes into operation only when these regulations are infringed.

In short, this appendix also is distinguished by slovenly editing.

Dixi et salvavi animam meam. [I have spoken and saved my soul.]

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[1] Quoted from Goethe's *Das Göttliche*

[2] Epitaph used by the Eisenachers . Here a play on words in German.

Foundations of Leninism

by Josef Stalin, 1953

Introduction

The foundations of Leninism is a big subject. To exhaust it a whole volume would be required. Indeed, a whole number of volumes would be required. Naturally, therefore, my lectures cannot be an exhaustive exposition of Leninism; at best they can only offer a concise synopsis of the foundations of Leninism. Nevertheless, I consider it useful to give this synopsis, in order to lay down some basic points of departure necessary for the successful study of Leninism.

Expounding the foundations of Leninism still does not mean expounding the basis of Lenin's world outlook. Lenin's world outlook and the foundations of Leninism are not identical in scope. Lenin was a Marxist, and Marxism is, of course, the basis of his world outlook. But from this it does not at all follow that an exposition of Leninism ought to begin with an exposition of the foundations of Marxism. To expound Leninism means to expound the distinctive and new in the works of Lenin that Lenin contributed to the general treasury of Marxism and that is naturally connected with his name. Only in this sense will I speak in my lectures of the foundations of Leninism.

And so, what is Leninism?

Some say that Leninism is the application of Marxism to the conditions that are peculiar to the situation in Russia. This definition contains a particle of truth, but not the whole truth by any means. Lenin, indeed, applied Marxism to Russian conditions, and applied it in a masterly way. But if Leninism were only the application of Marxism to the conditions that are peculiar to Russia it would be a purely national and only a national, a purely Russian

and only a Russian, phenomenon. We know, however, that Leninism is not merely a Russian , but an international phenomenon rooted in the whole of international development. That is why I think this definition suffers from one-sidedness.

Others say that Leninism is the revival of the revolutionary elements of Marxism of the 40's of the nineteenth century, as distinct from the Marxism of subsequent years, when, it is alleged, it became moderate, non-revolutionary. If we disregard this foolish and vulgar division of the teachings of Marx into two parts, revolutionary and moderate, we must admit that even this totally inadequate and unsatisfactory definition contains a particle of truth. This particle of truth is that Lenin did indeed restore the revolutionary content of Marxism, which had been suppressed by the opportunists of the Second International. Still, that is but a particle of the truth. The whole truth about Leninism is that Leninism not only restored Marxism, but also took a step forward, developing Marxism further under the new conditions of capitalism and of the class struggle of the proletariat.

What, then, in the last analysis, is Leninism?

Leninism is Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. To be more exact, Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general, the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular. Marx and Engels pursued their activities in the pre-revolutionary period, (we have the proletarian revolution in mind), when developed imperialism did not yet exist, in the period of the proletarians' preparation for revolution, in the period when the proletarian revolution was not yet an immediate practical inevitability. But Lenin, the disciple of Marx and Engels, pursued his activities in the period of developed imperialism, in the period of the unfolding proletarian revolution, when the proletarian revolution had already triumphed in one country, had smashed bourgeois democracy and had ushered in the era of proletarian democracy, the era of the Soviets.

That is why Leninism is the further development of Marxism.

It is usual to point to the exceptionally militant and exceptionally revolutionary character of Leninism. This is quite correct. But this specific feature of Leninism is due to two causes: firstly, to the fact that Leninism

emerged from the proletarian revolution, the imprint of which it cannot but bear; secondly, to the fact that it grew and became strong in clashes with the opportunism of the Second International, the fight against which was and remains an essential preliminary condition for a successful fight against capitalism. It must not be forgotten that between Marx and Engels, on the one hand, and Lenin, on the other, there lies a whole period of undivided domination of the opportunism of the Second International, and the ruthless struggle against this opportunism could not but constitute one of the most important tasks of Leninism.

Chapter 1: The Historical Roots of Leninism

Leninism grew up and took shape under the conditions of imperialism, when the contradictions of capitalism had reached an extreme point, when the proletarian revolution had become an immediate practical question, when the old period of preparation of the working class for revolution had arrived at and passed into a new period, that of direct assault on capitalism.

Lenin called imperialism "moribund capitalism." Why? Because imperialism carries the contradictions of capitalism to their last bounds, to the extreme limit, beyond which revolution begins. Of these contradictions, there are three which must be regarded as the most important.

The *first contradiction* is the contradiction between labor and capital. Imperialism is the omnipotence of the monopolist trusts and syndicates, of the banks and the financial oligarchy, in the industrial countries. In the fight against this omnipotence, the customary methods of the working class—trade unions and cooperatives, parliamentary parties and the parliamentary struggle—have proved to be totally inadequate. Either place yourself at the mercy of capital, eke out a wretched existence as of old and sink lower and lower, or adopt a new weapon-this is the alternative imperialism puts before the vast masses of the proletariat. Imperialism brings the working class to revolution.

The *second contradiction* is the contradiction among the various financial groups and imperialist Powers in their struggle for sources of raw materials, for foreign territory. Imperialism is the export of capital to the sources of raw materials, the frenzied struggle for monopolist possession of these sources, the struggle for a re-division of the already divided world, a struggle waged with particular fury by new financial groups and Powers seeking a "place in the sun" against the old groups and Powers, which cling tenaciously to what they have seized. This frenzied struggle among the various groups of capitalists is notable in that it includes as an inevitable element imperialist wars, wars for the annexation of foreign territory. This circumstance, in its turn, is notable in that it leads to the mutual weakening of the imperialists, to the weakening of the position of capitalism in general,

to the acceleration of the advent of the proletarian revolution and to the practical necessity of this revolution.

The *third contradiction* is the contradiction between the handful of ruling, "civilized" nations and the hundreds of millions of the colonial and dependent peoples of the world. Imperialism is the most barefaced exploitation and the most inhumane oppression of hundreds of millions of people inhabiting vast colonies and dependent countries. The purpose of this exploitation and of this oppression is to squeeze out super-profits. But in exploiting these countries imperialism is compelled to build these railways, factories and mills, industrial and commercial centers. The appearance of a class of proletarians, the emergence of a native intelligentsia, the awakening of national consciousness, the growth of the liberation movement—such are the inevitable results of this "policy." The growth of the revolutionary movement in all colonies and dependent countries without exception clearly testifies to this fact. This circumstance is of importance for the proletariat inasmuch as it saps radically the position of capitalism by converting the colonies and dependent countries from reserves of imperialism into reserves of the proletarian revolution.

Such, in general, are the principal contradictions of imperialism which have converted the old, "flourishing" capitalism into moribund capitalism.

The significance of the imperialist war which broke out ten years ago lies, among other things, in the fact that it gathered all these contradictions into a single knot and threw them on to the scales, thereby accelerating and facilitating the revolutionary battles of the proletariat.

In other words, imperialism was instrumental not only in making the revolution a practical inevitability, but also in creating favorable conditions for a direct assault on the citadels of capitalism.

Such was the international situation which gave birth to Leninism.

Some may say: this is all very well, but what has it to do with Russia, which was not and could not be a classical land of imperialism? What has it to do with Lenin, who worked primarily in Russia and for Russia? Why did Russia, of all countries, become the home of Leninism, the birthplace of the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution?

Because Russia was the focus of all these contradictions of imperialism.

Because Russia, more than any other country, was pregnant with revolution, and she alone, therefore, was in a position to solve those contradictions in a revolutionary way.

To begin with, tsarist Russia was the home of every kind of oppression—capitalist, colonial and militarist—in its most inhuman and barbarous form. Who does not know that in Russia the omnipotence of capital was combined with the despotism of tsarism, the aggressiveness of Russian nationalism with tsarism's role of executioner in regard to the non-Russian peoples, the exploitation of entire regions—Turkey, Persia, China—with the seizure of these regions by tsarism, with wars of conquest? Lenin was right in saying that tsarism was "military-feudal imperialism." Tsarism was the concentration of the worst features of imperialism, raised to a high pitch.

To proceed. Tsarist Russia was a major reserve of Western imperialism, not only in the sense that it gave free entry to foreign capital, which controlled such basic branches of Russia's national economy as the fuel and metallurgical industries, but also in the sense that it could supply the Western imperialists with millions of soldiers. Remember the Russian army, fourteen million strong, which shed its blood on the imperialist fronts to safeguard the staggering profits of the British and French capitalists.

Further, Tsarism was not only the watchdog of imperialism in the east of Europe, but, in addition, it was the agent of Western imperialism for squeezing out of the population hundreds of millions by way of interest on loans obtained in Paris and London, Berlin and Brussels.
Finally, tsarism was a most faithful ally of Western imperialism in the partition of Turkey, Persia, China, etc. Who does not know that the imperialist war was waged by tsarism in alliance with the imperialists of the Entente, and that Russia was an essential element in that war?

That is why the interests of tsarism and of Western imperialism were interwoven and ultimately became merged in a single skein of imperialist interest.

Could Western imperialism resign itself to the loss of such a powerful support in the East and of such a rich reservoir of manpower and resources

as old, tsarist, bourgeois Russia was without exerting all its strengths to wage a life-and-death struggle against the revolution in Russia, with the object of defending and preserving tsarism? Of course not.

But from this it follows that whoever wanted to strike at tsarism necessarily raised his hand against imperialism, whoever rose against tsarism had to rise against imperialism as well; for whoever was bent on overthrowing tsarism had to overthrow imperialism too, if he really intended not merely to defeat tsarism, but to make a clean sweep of it. Thus the revolution against tsarism verged on and had to pass into a revolution against imperialism, into a proletarian revolution.

Meanwhile, in Russia a tremendous popular revolution was rising, headed by the most revolutionary proletariat in the world, which possessed such an important ally as the revolutionary peasantry of Russia. Does it need proof that such a revolution could not stop halfway, that in the event of success it was bound to advance further and raise the banner of revolt against imperialism?

That is why Russia was bound to become the focus of the contradictions of imperialism, not only in the sense that it was in Russia that these contradictions were revealed most plainly, in view of their particularly repulsive and particularly intolerable character, and not only because Russia was a highly important prop of Western imperialism, connecting Western finance capital with the colonies in the East, but also because Russia was the only country in which there existed a real force capable of resolving the contradictions of imperialism in a revolutionary way.

From this it follows, however, that the revolution in Russia could not but become a proletarian revolution, that from its very inception it could not but assume an international character, and that, therefore, it could not but shake the very foundations of world imperialism.

Under these circumstances, could the Russian Communist confine their work within the narrow national bounds of the Russian revolution? Of course not. On the contrary, the whole situation ,both internal (the profound revolutionary crisis) and external (the war), impelled them to go beyond these bounds in their work, to transfer the struggle to the international arena, to expose the ulcers of imperialism, to prove that the collapse of

capitalism was inevitable, to smash social-chauvinism and social-pacifism, and , finally, to overthrow capitalism in their own country and to forge a new fighting weapon for the proletariat—the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution—in order to facilitate the task of overthrowing capitalism for the proletarians of all countries. Nor could the Russian Communist act otherwise, for only this path offered the chance of producing certain changes in the international situation which could safeguard Russia against the restoration of the bourgeois order.

That is why Russia became the home of Leninism, and why Lenin, the leader of the Russian Communist, became its creator.

The same thing, approximately, "happened" in the case of Russia and Lenin as in the case of Germany and Marx and Engels in the forties of the last century. Germany at that time was pregnant with bourgeois revolution just like Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century. Marx wrote at that time in the Communist Manifesto:

"The Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany, because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution that is bound to be carried out under more advanced conditions of European civilisation, and with a much more developed proletariat, than that of England was in the seventeenth, and of France in the eighteenth century, and because the bourgeois revolution in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution." [1]

In other words, the center of the revolutionary movement was shifting to Germany.
There can hardly be any doubt that it was this very circumstance, noted by Marx in the above-quoted passage, that served as the probable reason why it was precisely Germany that became the birthplace of scientific socialism and why the leaders of the German proletariat, Marx and Engels, became its creators.

The same, only to a still greater degree, must be said of Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century. Russia was then on the eve of a bourgeois revolution; she had to accomplish this revolution at a time when conditions in Europe were more advanced, and with a proletariat that was more developed than that of Germany in the forties of the nineteenth (let

alone Britain and France); moreover, all the evidence went to show that this revolution was bound to serve as a ferment and as a prelude to the proletarian revolution. We cannot regard it as accidental that as early as 1902, when the Russian revolution was still in an embryonic state, Lenin wrote the prophetic words in his pamphlet *What Is To Be Done?* :

"History has now confronted us (i.e., the Russian Marxists-J. St.) with an immediate task which is the *most revolutionary* of all the *immediate* tasks that confront the proletariat of any country," and that… "the fulfillment of this task, the destruction of the most powerful bulwark, not only of European, but also (it may now be said) of Asiatic reaction, would make the Russian proletariat the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat" (see Vol. IV, p. 382).

In other words, the center of the revolutionary movement was bound to shift to Russia.
As we know, the course of the revolution in Russia has more than vindicated Lenin's prediction.

Is it surprising, after all this, that a country which has accomplished such a revolution and possesses such a proletariat should have been the birthplace of the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution?

Is it surprising that Lenin, the leader of Russia's proletariat, became also the creator of this theory and tactics and the leader of the international proletariat?

Chapter 2: Method

I have already said that between Marx and Engels on the one hand, and Lenin, on the other, there lies a whole period of domination of the opportunism of the Second International. For the sake of exactitude I must add that it is not the formal domination of opportunism I have in mind, but only its actual domination. Formally, the Second International was headed by "faithful" Marxists, by the "orthodox"—Kautsky and others. Actually, however, the main work of the Second International followed the line of opportunism. The opportunists adapted themselves to the bourgeois because of their adaptive, petty-bourgeois nature; the "orthodox," in their turn, adapted themselves to the opportunists in order to "preserve unity" with them, in the interests of "peace within the party." Thus the link between the policy of the bourgeois and the policy of the "orthodox" was closed, and, as a result, opportunism reigned supreme.

This was the period of the relatively peaceful development of capitalism, the pre-war period, so to speak, when the catastrophic contradictions of imperialism had not yet became so glaringly evident, when workers' economic strikes and trade unions were developing more or less "normally," when election campaigns and parliamentary groups yielded "dizzying" successes, when legal forms of struggle were lauded to the skies, and when it was thought that capitalism would be "killed" by legal means—in short, when the parties of the Second International were living in clover and had no inclination to think seriously about revolution, about the dictatorship of the proletariat, about the revolutionary education of the masses.
Instead of an integral revolutionary theory, there were contradictory theoretical postulates and fragments of theory, which were divorced from the actual revolutionary struggle of the masses and had been turned into threadbare dogmas. For the sake of appearances, Marx's theory was mentioned, of course, but only to rob it of its living, revolutionary spirit.

Instead of a revolutionary policy, there was flabby philistinism and sordid political bargaining, parliamentary diplomacy and parliamentary scheming.

For the sake of appearances, of course, "revolutionary" resolutions and slogans were adopted, but only to be pigeonholed.

Instead of the party being trained and taught correct revolutionary tactics on the basis of its own mistakes, there was a studied evasion of vexed questions, which were glossed over and veiled. For the sake of appearances, of course, there was no objection to talking about vexed questions, but only in order to wind up with some sort of "elastic" resolution.

Such was the physiognomy of the Second International, its methods of work, its arsenal.

Meanwhile, a new period of imperialist wars and of revolutionary battles of the proletariat was approaching. The old methods of fighting were proving obviously inadequate and impotent in the face of the omnipotence of finance capital.

It became necessary to overhaul the entire activity of the Second International, its entire method of work, and to drive out all philistinism, narrow-mindedness, political scheming, regency, social-chauvinism and social-pacifism. It became necessary to examine the entire arsenal of the Second International, to throw out all that was rusty and antiquated, to forge new weapons. Without this preliminary work it was useless embarking upon war against capitalism. Without this work the proletariat ran the risk of finding itself inadequately armed, or even completely unarmed, in the future revolutionary battles.

The honor of bringing about this general overhauling and general cleansing of the Augean stables of the Second International fell to Leninism.

Such were the conditions under which the method of Leninism was born and hammered out.

What are the requirements of this method?

Firstly , the *testing* of the theoretical dogmas of the Second International in the crucible of the revolutionary struggle of the masses, in the crucible of living practice—that is to say, the restoration of the broken unity between theory and practice, the healing of the rift between them; for only in this

way can a truly proletarian party armed with revolutionary theory be created.

Secondly , the *testing* of the policy of the parties of the Second International, not by their slogans and resolutions (which cannot be trusted), but by their deeds, by their actions; for only in this way can the confidence of the proletarian masses be won and deserved.
Thirdly , the *reorganization* of all Party work on new revolutionary lines, with a view to training and preparing the masses for the revolutionary struggle; for only in this way can the masses be prepared for the proletarian revolution.

Fourthly , *self-criticism* within the proletarian parties, their education and training on the basis of their own mistakes; for only in this way can genuine cadres and genuine leaders of the Party be trained.

Such is the basis and substance of the method of Leninism.

How was this method applied in practice?

The opportunists of the Second International have a number of theoretical dogmas to which they always revert as their starting point. Let us take a few of these.

First dogma : concerning the conditions for the seizure of power by the proletariat. The opportunists assert that the proletariat cannot and ought not to take power unless it constitutes a majority in the country. No proofs are brought forward, for there are no proofs, either theoretical or practical, that can bear out this absurd thesis. Let us assume that this is so, Lenin replies to the gentlemen of the Second International; but suppose a historical situation has arisen (a war, an agrarian crisis, etc.) in which the proletariat, constituting a minority of the population, has an opportunity to rally around itself the vast majority of the laboring masses; why should it not take power then? Why should the proletariat not take advantage of a favorable international and internal situation to pierce the front of capital and hasten the general denouement? Did not Marx say as far back as the fifties of the last century that things could go "splendidly" with the proletarian revolution in Germany were it possible to back it by, so to speak, a "second edition of the Peasant War"? [2] Is it not a generally known fact that in those days the

number of proletarians in Germany was relatively smaller than, for example, in Russia in 1917? Has not the practical experience of the Russian proletarian revolution shown that this favorite dogma of the heroes of the Second International is devoid of all vital significance for the proletariat? Is it not clear that the practical experience of the revolutionary struggle of the masses refutes and smashes this obsolete dogma?

Second dogma : the proletariat cannot retain power if it lacks an adequate number of trained cultural and administrative cadres capable of organizing the administration of the country; these cadres must first be trained under capitalist conditions, and only then can power be taken. Let us assume that this is so, replies Lenin; but why not turn it this way: first take power, create favorable conditions for the development of the proletariat, and then proceed with seven-league strides to raise the cultural level of the laboring masses and train numerous cadres of leaders and administrators from among the workers? Has not Russian experience shown that the cadres of leaders recruited from the ranks of the workers develop a hundred times more rapidly and effectively under the rule of the proletariat than under the rule of capital? Is it not clear that the practical experience of the revolutionary struggle of the masses ruthlessly smashes this theoretical dogma of the opportunists too?

Third dogma : the proletariat cannot accept the method of the *political* general strike because it is unsound in theory (see Engels's criticism) and dangerous in practice (it may disturb the normal course of economic life in the country, it may deplete the coffers of the trade unions), and cannot serve as a substitute for parliamentary forms of struggle, which are the principal form of the class struggle of the proletariat. Very well, reply the Leninists; but, firstly , Engels did not criticize every kind of general strike. He only criticized a certain kind of general strike, namely, the *economic general strike advocated by the Anarchists* [3] *in place of* the political struggle of the proletariat. What has this to do with the method of the *political* general strike?

Secondly , where and by whom has it ever been proved that the parliamentary form of struggle is the principle form of struggle of the proletariat? Does not the history of the revolutionary movement show that the parliamentary struggle is only a school for, and an auxiliary in, organizing the extra-parliamentary struggle of the proletariat, that under

capitalism the fundamental problems of the working-class movement are solved by force, by the direct struggle of the proletarian masses, their general strike, their uprising?
Thirdly , who suggested that the method of the political general strike be substituted for the parliamentary struggle? Where and when have the supporters of the political general strike sought to substitute extra-parliamentary forms of struggle for parliamentary forms?
Fourthly , has not the revolution in Russia shown that the *political* general strike is a highly important school for the proletarian revolution and an indispensable means of mobilizing and organizing the vast masses of the proletariat on the eve of storming the citadels of capitalism? Why then the philistine lamentations over the disturbance of the normal course of economic life and over the coffers of the trade unions? Is it not clear that the practical experience of the revolutionary struggle smashes this dogma of the opportunists too? And so on and so forth.

This is why Lenin said that "revolutionary theory is not a dogma," that it "assumes final shape only in close connection with the practical activity of a truly mass and truly revolutionary movement" [4] ; for theory must serve practice, for "theory must answer the questions raised by practice", [5] for it must be tested by practical results.

As to the political slogans and the political resolutions of the parties of the Second International, it is sufficient to recall the history of the slogan "war against war" to realize how utterly false and utterly rotten are the political practices of these parties, which use pompous revolutionary slogans and resolutions to cloak their anti-revolutionary deeds. We all remember the pompous demonstrations of the Second International at the Basle Congress, [6] at which it threatened the imperialist with all the horrors of insurrection if they should dare to start a war, and with the menacing slogan "war against war." But who does not remember that some time after, on the very eve of the war, the Basle resolution was pigeonholed and the workers were given a new slogan to exterminate each other for the glory of their capitalist fatherlands? Is it not clear that revolutionary slogans and resolutions are not worth a farthing unless backed by deeds? One need only contrast the Leninist policy of transforming the imperialist war into civil war with the treacherous policy of the Second International during the war to understand

the utter baseness of the opportunist politicians and the full grandeur of the method of Leninism.

I cannot refrain from quoting at this point a passage from Lenin's book *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* , in which Lenin severely castigates an opportunist attempt by the leader of the Second International, K. Kautsky, to judge parties not by their deeds, but by their paper slogans and documents:

"Kautsky is pursuing a typically petty-bourgeois, philistine policy by pretending... *that putting forward a slogan* alters the position. The entire history of bourgeois democracy refutes this illusion; the bourgeois democrats have always advanced and still advance all sorts of "slogans' in order to deceive the people. The point is to *test their sincerity, to compare their words with their deeds* , not to be satisfied with idealistic or charlatan *phrases* , but to get down to *class reality* " (see Vol. XXIII, p. 377).

There is no need to mention the fear the parties of the Second International have of self-criticism, their habit of concealing their mistakes, of glossing over vexed questions, of covering up their shortcomings by a deceptive show of well-being which blunts living thought and prevents the Party from deriving revolutionary training from its own mistakes, a habit which was ridiculed and pilloried by Lenin. Here is what Lenin wrote about self-criticism in proletarian parties in his pamphlet *"Left-Wing" Communism* :

"The attitude of a political party towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest ways of judging how earnest the party is and how it *in practice* fulfills its obligation towards its *class* and the toiling *masses* . Frankly admitting a mistake, ascertaining the reasons for it, analyzing the circumstances which gave rise to it, and thoroughly discussing the means of correcting it, that is the earmark of a serious party; that is the way it should perform its duties, that is the way it should educate and train the *class* , and then the *masses* " (see Vol. XXV, p. 200).

Some say that the exposure of its own mistakes and self-criticism are dangerous for the Party because they may be used by the enemy against the party of the proletariat. Lenin regarded such objections as trivial and entirely wrong. Here is what he wrote on this subject as far back as 1904, in his pamphlet *One Step Forward* , when our Party was still weak and small:

"They (i.e., the opponents of the Marxists-J. St.) gloat and grimace over our controversies; and, of course, they will try to pick isolated passages from my pamphlet, which deals with the defects and shortcomings of our Party, and to use them for their own ends. The Russian Social-Democrats are already steeled enough in battle not to be perturbed by these pinpricks and to continue, in spite of them, their work of self-criticism and ruthless exposure of their own shortcomings, which will unquestionably and inevitably be overcome as the working-class movement grows" (see Vol. VI, p. 161).

Such, in general, are the characteristic features of the method of Leninism.

What is contained in Lenin's method was in the main already contained in the teachings of Marx, which, according to Marx himself, were "in essence critical and revolutionary." [7] It is precisely this critical and revolutionary spirit that pervades Lenin's method from beginning to end. But it would be wrong to suppose that Lenin's method is merely the restoration of the method of Marx. As a matter of fact, Lenin's method is not only the restoration of, but also the concretisation and further development of the critical and revolutionary method of Marx, of his materialist dialectics.

Chapter 3: Theory

From this theme I take three questions:

a) the importance of theory for the proletarian movement;
b) criticism of the "theory" of spontaneity;
c) the theory of the proletarian revolution.

1) The importance of theory . Some think that Leninism is the precedence of practice over theory in the sense that its main point is the translation of the Marxist theses into deeds, their "execution"; as for theory; it is alleged that Leninism is rather unconcerned about it. We know that Plekhanov time and again chaffed Lenin about his "unconcern" for theory, and particularly for philosophy. We also know that theory is not held in great favor by many present-day Leninist practical workers, particularly in view of the immense amount of practical work imposed upon them by the situation. I must declare that this more than odd opinion about Lenin and Leninism is quite wrong and bears no relation whatsoever to the truth; that the attempt of practical workers to brush theory aside runs counter to the whole spirit of Leninism and is fraught with serious dangers to the work.

Theory is the experience of the working-class movement in all countries taken in its general aspect. Of course, theory becomes purposeless if it is not connected with revolutionary practice, just as practice gropes in the dark if its path is not illuminated by revolutionary theory. But theory can become a tremendous force in the working-class movement if it is built up in indissoluble connection with revolutionary practice; for theory, and theory alone, can give the movement confidence, the power of orientation, and an understanding of the inner relation of surrounding events; for it, and it alone, can help practice to realize not only how and in which direction classes are moving at the present time, but also how and in which direction they will move in the near future. None other than Lenin uttered and repeated scores of times the well-known thesis that:

" *Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement* " [8] (see Vol. IV, p. 380).

Lenin, better than anyone else, understood the great importance of theory, particularly for a party such as ours, in view of the vanguard fighter of the international proletariat which has fallen to its lot, and in view of the complicated internal and international situation in which it finds itself. Foreseeing this special role of our Party as far back as 1902, he thought it necessary even then to point out that:

" *The role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory* " (see Vol. IV, p. 380).

It scarcely needs proof that now, when Lenin's prediction about the role of our Party has come true, this thesis of Lenin's acquires special force and special importance.

Perhaps the most striking expression of the great importance which Lenin attached to theory is the fact that none other than Lenin undertook the very serious task of generalizing, on the basis of materialist philosophy, the most important achievements of science from the time of Engels down to his time, as well as of subjecting to comprehensive criticism the anti-materialistic trends among Marxists. Engels said that "materialism must assume a new aspect with every new great discovery." [9] It is well known that none other than Lenin accomplished this task for his own time in his remarkable work *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* . [10] It is well known that Plekhanov, who loved to chaff Lenin about his "unconcern" for philosophy, did not even dare to make a serious attempt to undertake such a task.

2) Criticism of the "theory" of spontaneity, or the role of the vanguard in the movement . The "theory" of spontaneity is a theory of opportunism, a theory of worshiping the spontaneity of the labor movement, a theory which actually repudiates the leading role of the vanguard of the working class, of the party of the working class.

The theory of worshiping spontaneity is decidedly opposed to the revolutionary character of the working class movement; it is opposed to the movement taking the line of struggle against the foundations of capitalism; it is in favor of the movement proceeding exclusively along the line of "realizable demands, of demands "acceptable" to capitalism; it is wholly in

favor of the "line of least resistance." The theory of spontaneity is the ideology of trade unionism.

The theory of worshiping spontaneity is decidedly opposed to giving the spontaneous movement a politically conscious, planned character. It is opposed to the Party marching at the head of the working class, to the Party raising the masses to the level of political consciousness, to the Party leading the movement; it is in favor of the politically conscious elements of the movement not hindering the movement from taking its own course; it is in favor of the Party only heeding the spontaneous movement and dragging at the tail of it. The theory of spontaneity is the theory of belittling the role of the conscious element in the movement, the ideology of "khvostism," the logical basis of *all opportunism* .

In practice this theory, which appeared on the scene even before the first revolution in Russia, led its adherents, the so-called "Economists," to deny the need for an independent workers' party in Russia, to oppose the revolutionary struggle of the working class for the overthrow of tsarism, to preach a purely trade-unionist policy in the movement, and, in general, to surrender the labor movement to the hegemony of the liberal bourgeoisie.

The fight of the old Iskra and the brilliant criticism of the theory of "khvostism" in Lenin's pamphlet *What Is To Be Done?* not only smashed so-called "Economism," but also created the theoretical foundations for a truly revolutionary movement of the Russian working class.

Without this fight it would have been quite useless even to think of creating an independent workers' party in Russia and of its playing a leading part in the revolution.

But the theory of worshiping spontaneity is not an exclusively Russian phenomenon. It is extremely widespread—in a somewhat different form, it is true—in all parties of the Second International, without exception. I have in mind the so-called "productive forces" theory as debased by the leaders of the Second International, which justifies everything and conciliates everybody, which records facts and explains them after everyone has become sick and tired of them, and, having recorded them, rests content. Marx said that the materialist theory could not confine itself to explaining the world, that it must also change it. [11] But Kautsky and Co. are not

concerned with this; they prefer to rest content with the first part of Marx's formula.

Here is one of the numerous examples of the application of this "theory." It is said that before the imperialist war the parties of the Second International threatened to declare "war against war" if the imperialists should start a war. It is said that on the very eve of the war these parties pigeonholed the "war against war" slogan and applied an opposite one, viz., "war for the imperialist fatherland." It is said that as a result of this change of slogans millions of workers were sent to their death. But it would be a mistake to think that there were some people to blame for this, that someone was unfaithful to the working class or betrayed it. Not at all! Everything happened as it should have happened. Firstly, because the International, it seems, is "an instrument of peace," and not of war. Secondly, because, in view of the "level of the productive forces" which then prevailed, nothing else could be done. The "productive forces" are "to blame." That is the precise explanation vouchsafed to "us" by Mr. Kautsky's "theory of the productive forces." And whoever does not believe in that "theory" is not a Marxist. The role of the parties? Their importance for the movement? But what can a party do against such a decisive factor as the "level of the productive forces"?...

One could cite a host of similar examples of the falsification of Marxism.

It scarcely needs proof that this spurious "Marxism," designed to hide the nakedness of opportunism, is merely a European variety of the selfsame theory of "khvostism" which Lenin fought even before the first Russian revolution.

It scarcely needs proof that the demolition of this theoretical falsification is a preliminary condition for the creation of truly revolutionary parties in the West.

3) The theory of the proletarian revolution . Lenin's theory of the proletarian revolution proceeds from three fundamental theses.

First thesis : The domination of finance capital in the advanced capitalist countries; the issue of stocks and bonds as one of the principal operations of finance capital; the export of capital to the sources of raw materials, which

is one of the foundations of imperialism; the omnipotence of a financial oligarchy, which is the result of the domination of finance capital—all this reveals the grossly parasitic character of monopolistic capitalism, makes the yoke of the capitalist trusts and syndicates a hundred times more burdensome, intensifies the indignation of the working class with the foundations of capitalism, and brings the masses to the proletarian revolution as their only salvation (see Lenin, *Imperialism* [12]).

Hence the first conclusion: intensification of the revolutionary crisis within the capitalist countries and growth of the elements of an explosion on the internal, proletarian front in the "metropolises."

Second thesis : The increase in the export of capital to the colonies and dependent countries; the expansion of "spheres of influence" and colonial possessions until they cover the whole globe; the transformation of capitalism into a world system of financial enslavement and colonial oppression of the vast majority of the population of the world by a handful of "advanced" countries—all this has, on the one hand, converted the separate national economies and national territories into links in a single chain called world economy, and, on the other hand, split the population of the globe into two camps: a handful of "advanced" capitalist countries which exploit and oppress vast colonies and dependencies, and the huge majority consisting of colonial and dependent countries which are compelled to wage a struggle for liberation from the imperialist yoke (see *Imperialism*).

Hence the second conclusion: intensification of the revolutionary crisis in the colonial countries and growth of the elements of revolt against imperialism on the external, colonial front.

Third thesis : The monopolistic possession of "spheres of influence" and colonies; the uneven development of the capitalist countries, leading to a frenzied struggle for the redivision of the world between the countries which have already seized territories and those claiming their "share"; imperialist wars as the only means of restoring the disturbed "equilibrium"—all this leads to the intensification of the struggle on the third front, the inter-capitalist front, which weakens imperialism and facilitates the union of the first two fronts against imperialism: the front of

the revolutionary proletariat and the front of colonial emancipation (see *Imperialism*).

Hence the third conclusion: that under imperialism wars cannot be averted, and that a coalition between the proletarian revolution in Europe and the colonial revolution in the East in a united world front of revolution against the world front of imperialism is inevitable.

Lenin combines all these conclusions into one general conclusion that " *imperialism is the eve of the socialist revolution* " [13] (see Vol. XIX, p. 71).

The very approach to the question of the proletarian revolution, of the character of the revolution, of its scope, of its depth, the scheme of the revolution in general, changes accordingly.
Formerly, the analysis of the pre-requisites for the proletarian revolution was usually approached from the point of view of the economic state of individual countries. Now, this approach is no longer adequate. Now the matter must be approached from the point of view of the economic state of all or the majority of countries, from the point of view of the state of world economy; for individual countries and individual national economies have ceased to be self-sufficient units, have become links in a single chain called world economy; for the old "cultured" capitalism has evolved into imperialism, and imperialism is a world system of financial enslavement and colonial oppression of the vast majority of the population of the world by a handful of "advanced" countries.

Formerly it was the accepted thing to speak of the existence or absence of objective conditions for the proletarian revolution in individual countries, or, to be more precise, in one or another developed country. Now this point of view is no longer adequate. Now we must speak of the existence of objective conditions for the revolution in the entire system of world imperialist economy as an integral whole; the existence within this system of some countries that are not sufficiently developed industrially cannot serve as an insuperable obstacle to the revolution, if the system as a whole or, more correctly, *because* the system as a whole is already ripe for revolution.

Formerly, it was the accepted thing to speak of the proletarian revolution in one or another developed country as of a separate and self-sufficient entity

opposing a separate national front of capital as its antipode. Now, this point of view is no longer adequate. Now we must speak of the world proletarian revolution; for the separate national fronts of capital have become links in a single chain called the world front of imperialism, which must be opposed by a common front of the revolutionary movement in all countries.

Formerly the proletarian revolution was regarded exclusively as the result of the internal development of a given country. Now, this point of view is no longer adequate. Now the proletarian revolution must be regarded primarily as the result of the development of the contradictions within the world system of imperialism, as the result of the breaking of the chain of the world imperialist front in one country or another.

Where will the revolution begin? Where, in what country, can the front of capital be pierced first?

Where industry is more developed, where the proletarian constitutes the majority, where the proletariat constitutes the majority, where there is more culture, where there is more democracy—that was the reply usually given formerly.

No, objects the Leninist theory of revolution, *not necessarily where industry is more developed, and so forth* . The front of capital will be pierced where the chain of imperialism is weakest , for the proletarian revolution is the result of the breaking of the chain of the world imperialist front at its weakest link; and it may turn out that the country which has started the revolution, which has made a breach in the front of capital, is less developed in a capitalist sense than other, more developed, countries, which have, however, remained within the framework of capitalism.

In 1917 the chain of the imperialist world front proved to be weaker in Russia than in the other countries. It was there that the chain broke and provided an outlet for the proletarian revolution. Why? Because in Russia a great popular revolution was unfolding and at its head marched the revolutionary proletariat, which had such an important ally as the vast mass of the peasantry, which was oppressed and exploited by the landlords. Because the revolution there was opposed by such a hideous representative of imperialism as tsarism, which lacked all moral prestige and was deservedly hated by the whole population. The chain proved to be weaker

in Russia, although Russia was less developed in a capitalist sense than, say France or Germany, Britain or America.

Where will the chain break in the near future? Again, where it is weakest. It is not precluded that the chain may break, say, in India. Why? Because that country has a young, militant, revolutionary proletariat, which has such an ally as the national liberation movement—an undoubtedly powerful and undoubtedly important ally. Because there the revolution is confronted by such a well-known foe as foreign imperialism, which has no moral credit and is deservedly hated by all the oppressed and exploited masses in India.

It is also quite possible that the chain will break in Germany. Why? Because the factors which are operating, say, in India are beginning to operate in Germany as well; but, of course, the enormous difference in the level of development between India and Germany cannot but stamp its imprint on the progress and outcome of a revolution in Germany.

Lenin said that:

"The West-European capitalist countries will consummate their development toward socialism ... not by the even 'maturing' of socialism in them, but by the exploitation of some countries by others, by the exploitation of the first of the countries to be vanquished in the imperialist war combined with the exploitation of the whole of the East. On the other hand, precisely as a result of the first imperialist war, the East has definitely come into revolutionary movement, has been definitely drawn into the general maelstrom of the world revolutionary movement" (see Vol. XXVII, pp. 415-16)

Briefly: the chain of the imperialist front must, as a rule, break where the links are weaker and, at all events, not necessarily where capitalism is more developed, where there is such and such a percentage of proletarians and such and such a percentage of peasants, and so on.

That is why in deciding the question of proletarian revolution statistical estimates of the percentage of the proletarian population in a given country lose the exceptional importance so eagerly attached to them by the doctrinaires of the Second International, who have not understood imperialism and who fear revolution like the plague.

To proceed. The heroes of the Second International asserted (and continue to assert) that between the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the proletarian revolution there is a chasm, or at any rate a Chinese Wall, separating one from the other by a more or less protracted interval of time, during which the bourgeoisie having come into power, develops capitalism, while the proletariat accumulates strength and prepares for the "decisive struggle" against capitalism. This interval is usually calculated to extend over many decades, if not longer. It scarcely needs proof that this Chinese Wall "theory" is totally devoid of scientific meaning under the conditions of imperialism, that it is and can be only a means of concealing and camouflaging the counter-revolutionary aspirations of the bourgeoisie. It scarcely needs proof that under the conditions of imperialism, fraught as it is with collisions and wars; under the conditions of the "eve of the socialist revolution," when "flourishing" capitalism becomes "moribund" capitalism (Lenin) and the revolutionary movement is growing in all countries of the world; when imperialism is allying itself with all reactionary forces without exception, down to and including tsarism and serfdom, thus making imperative the coalition of all revolutionary forces, from the proletarian movement of the West, to the national liberation movement of the East; when the overthrow of the survivals of the regime of feudal serfdom becomes impossible without a revolutionary struggle against imperialism, it scarcely needs proof that the bourgeois-democratic revolution, in a more of less developed country, must under such circumstances verge upon the proletarian revolution, that the former must pass into the latter. The history of the revolution in Russia has provided palpable proof that this thesis is correct and incontrovertible. It was not without reason that Lenin, as far back as 1905, on the eve of the first Russian revolution, in his pamphlet Two Tactics depicted the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the socialist revolution as two links in the same chain, as a single and integral picture of the sweep of the Russian revolution:

" *The proletariat must carry to completion the democratic revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush by force the resistance of the autocracy and to paralyze the instability of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat must accomplish the socialist revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the semi-proletarian elements of the population in order to crush by force the resistance of the bourgeoisie and to paralyze*

the instability of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie . Such are the tasks of the proletariat, which the new Iskra-ists present so narrowly in all their arguments and resolutions about the sweep of the revolution" (see Lenin, Vol. VIII, p. 96).

There is no need to mention other, later works of Lenin's, in which the idea of the bourgeoisie revolution passing into the proletarian revolution stands out in greater relief than in *Two Tactics* as one of the cornerstones of the Leninist theory of revolution.

Some comrades believe, it seems, that Lenin arrived at this idea only in 1916, that up to that time he had thought that the revolution in Russia would remain within the bourgeois framework, that power, consequently, would pass from the hands of the organ of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry into the hands of the bourgeoisie and not of the proletariat. It is said that this assertion has even penetrated into our communist press. I must say that this assertion is absolutely wrong, that it is totally at variance with the facts.

I might refer to Lenin's well-known speech at the Third Congress of the Party (1905), in which he defined the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, i.e., the victory of the democratic revolution, not as the "organization of 'order'" but as the "organization of war" (see Vol. VII, p. 264).

Further, I might refer to Lenin's well-known articles "On a Provisional Government" (1905), [14] where, outlining the prospects of the unfolding Russian revolution, he assigns to the Party the task of "ensuring that the Russian revolution is not a movement of a few months, but a movement of many years, that it leads, not merely to slight concessions on the part of the powers that be, but to the complete overthrow of those powers"; where, enlarging further on these prospects and linking them with the revolution in Europe, he goes on to say:

"And if we succeed in doing that, then... then the revolutionary conflagration will spread all over Europe; the European worker, languishing under bourgeois reaction, will rise in his turn and will show us 'how it is done'; then the revolutionary wave in Europe will sweep back again into

Russia and will convert an epoch of a few revolutionary years into an epoch of several revolutionary decades... " (ibid., p. 191).

I might further refer to a well-known article by Lenin published in November 1915, in which he writes:

"The proletariat is fighting, and will fight valiantly, to capture power, for a republic for the confiscation of the land ... for the participation of the 'non-proletarian masses of the people' in liberating *bourgeois* Russia from *military-feudal* 'imperialism' (=tsarism). [15] And the proletariat will immediately take advantage of this liberation of bourgeois Russia from tsarism, from the agrarian power of the landlords, not to aid the rich peasants in their struggle against the rural worker, but to bring about the socialist revolution in alliance with the proletarians of Europe" (see Vol. XVIII, p. 318).

Finally, I might refer to the well-known passage in Lenin's pamphlet *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* , where, referring to the above-quoted passage in *Two Tactics* on the sweep of the Russian revolution, he arrives at the following conclusion:
"Things turned out just as we said they would. The course taken by the revolution confirmed the correctness of our reasoning. First, with the 'whole' of the peasantry against the monarchy, against the landlords, against the medieval regime (and to that extent the revolution remains bourgeois, bourgeois-democratic.) Then, with the poor peasants, with the semi-proletarians, with all the exploited, against capitalism, including the rural rich, the kulaks, the profiteers, and to that extent the revolution becomes a socialist one. To attempt to raise an artificial Chinese Wall between the first and second, to separate them by anything else than the degree of preparedness of the proletariat and the degree of its unity with the poor peasants, means monstrously to distort Marxism, to vulgarize it, to replace it by liberalism" (see Vol. XXIII, p. 391).

That is sufficient, I think.
Very well, we may be told; but if that is the case, why did Lenin combat the idea of "permanent (uninterrupted) revolution"?

Because Lenin proposed that the revolutionary capacities of the peasantry be "exhausted" and that the fullest use be made of their revolutionary

energy for the complete liquidation of tsarism and for the transition to the proletarian revolution, whereas the adherents of "permanent revolution" did not understand the important role of the peasantry in the Russian revolution, underestimated the strength of the revolutionary energy of the peasantry, underestimated the strength and ability of the Russian proletariat to lead the peasantry and thereby hampered the work of emancipating the peasantry from the influence of the bourgeois, the work of rallying the peasantry around the proletariat.

Because Lenin proposed that the revolution *be crowned* with the transfer of power to the proletariat, whereas the adherents of "permanent" revolution wanted *to begin* at once with the establishment of the power of the proletariat, failing to realise that in so doing they were closing their eyes to such a "minor detail" as the survivals of serfdom and were leaving out of account so important a force as the Russian peasantry, failing to understand that such a policy could only retard the winning of the peasantry over to the side of the proletariat.

Consequently, Lenin fought the adherents of "permanent" revolution, not over the question of uninterruptedness, for Lenin himself maintained the point of view of uninterrupted revolution, but because they underestimated the role of the peasantry, which is an enormous reserve of the proletariat, because they failed to understand the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat.

The idea of "permanent" revolution should not be regarded as a new idea. It was first advanced by Marx at the end of the forties in his well-known *Address* to the *Communist League* (1850). It is from this document that our "permanentists" took the idea of uninterrupted revolution. It should be noted that in taking it from Marx our "permanentists" altered it somewhat, and in altering it "spoilt" it and made it unfit for practical use. The experienced hand of Lenin was needed to rectify this mistake, to take Marx's idea of uninterrupted revolution in its pure form and make it a cornerstone of his theory of revolution.
Here is what Marx says in his *Address* about uninterrupted (permanent) revolution, after enumerating a number of revolutionary-democratic demands which he calls upon the Communists to win:

"While the democratic petty bourgeois wish to bring the revolution to a conclusion as quickly as possible, and with the achievement, at most, of the above demands, it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been forced out of their position of dominance, until the proletariat has conquered state power, and the association of proletarians, not only in one country but in all the dominant countries of the world, has advanced so far that competition among the proletarians of these countries has ceased and that at least the decisive productive forces are concentrated in the hands of the proletarians." [16]

In other words:

a) Marx did not at all propose *to begin* the revolution in the Germany of the fifties with the immediate establishment of proletarian power, *contrary* to the plans of our Russian "permanentists."
b) Marx proposed only that the revolution *be crowned* with the establishment of proletarian state power, by hurling, step by step, one section of the bourgeoisie after another from the heights of power, in order, after the attainment of power by the proletariat, to kindle the fire of revolution in every country, and everything that Lenin taught and carried out in the course of our revolution in pursuit of his theory of the proletarian revolution under the conditions of imperialism was *fully in line* with that proposition.

It follows, then, that our Russian "permanentists" have not only underestimated the role of the peasantry in the Russian revolution and the importance of the idea of hegemony of the proletariat, but have altered (for the worse) Marx's idea of "permanent" revolution and made it unfit for practical use.

That is why Lenin ridiculed the theory of our "permanentists," calling it "original" and "fine," and accusing them of refusing to "think why, for ten whole years, life has passed by this fine theory." (Lenin's article was written in 1915, ten years after the appearance of the theory of the "permanentists" in Russia. See Vol. XVIII, p. 317.)

That is why Lenin regarded this theory as a semi-Menshevik theory and said that it "borrows from the Bolsheviks their call for a resolute

revolutionary struggle by the proletariat and the conquest of political power by the latter, and from the Mensheviks the 'repudiation' of the role of the peasantry" (see Lenin's article "Two Lines of the Revolution," ibid.).

This, then, is the position in regard to Lenin's idea of the bourgeois-democratic revolution passing into the proletarian revolution, of utilizing the bourgeois revolution for the "immediate" transition to the proletarian revolution.

To proceed. Formerly, the victory of the revolution in one country was considered impossible, on the assumption that it would require the combined action of the proletarians of all or at least of a majority of the advanced countries to achieve victory over the bourgeoisie. Now this point of view no longer fits in with the facts. Now we must proceed from the possibility of such a victory, for the uneven and spasmodic character of the development of the various capitalist countries under the conditions of imperialism, the development within imperialism of catastrophic contradictions leading to inevitable wars, the growth of the revolutionary movement in all countries of the world—all this leads, not only to the possibility, but also to the necessity of the victory of the proletariat in individual countries. The history of the revolution in Russia is direct proof of this. At the same time, however, it must be borne in mind that the overthrow of the bourgeoisie can be successfully accomplished only when certain absolutely necessary conditions exist, in the absence of which there can be even no question of the proletariat taking power.

Here is what Lenin says about these conditions in his pamphlet *"Left-Wing" Communism* :

"The fundamental law of revolution, which has been confirmed by all revolutions, and particularly by all three Russian revolutions in the twentieth century, is as follow: it is not enough for revolution that the exploited and oppressed masses should understand the impossibility of living in the old way and demand changes; it is essential for revolution that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way. Only when the *'lower classes' do not want* the old way, and when the 'upper classes' *cannot carry on in the old way* , only then can revolution triumph. This truth may be expressed in other words: *revolution is impossible without a*

nation-wide crisis (affecting both the exploited and the exploiters) . [17] It follows that for revolution it is essential, first, that a majority of the workers (or at least a majority of the class conscious, thinking, politically active workers) should fully understand that revolution is necessary and be ready to sacrifice their lives for it; secondly, that the ruling classes should be passing through a governmental crisis, which draws even the most backward masses into politics ... weakens the government and makes it possible for the revolutionaries to overthrow it rapidly" (see Vol. XXV, p, 222)

But the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie and establishment of the power of the proletariat in one country does not yet mean that the complete victory of socialism has been ensured. After consolidating its power and leading the peasantry in its wake the proletariat of the victorious country can and must build a socialist society. But does this mean that it will thereby achieve the complete and final victory of socialism, i.e., does it mean that with the forces of only one country it can finally consolidate socialism and fully guarantee that country against intervention and, consequently, also against restoration? No, it does not. For this the victory of the revolution in at least several countries is needed. Therefore, the development and support of the revolution in other countries is an essential task of the victorious revolution. Therefore, the revolution which has been victorious in one country must regard itself not as a self-sufficient entity, but as an aid, as a means for hastening the victory of the proletariat in other countries.

Lenin expressed this thought succinctly when he said that the task of the victorious revolution is to do "the utmost possible in one country for the development, support and awakening of the revolution *in all countries* ," (see Vol. XXIII, p. 385).

These, in general, are the characteristic features of Lenin's theory of proletarian revolution.

Chapter 4: The Dictatorship of the Proletariat

From this theme I take three fundamental questions:

a) the dictatorship of the proletariat as the instrument of the proletarian revolution;
b) the dictatorship of the proletariat as the rule of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie;
c) Soviet power as the state form of the dictatorship of the proletariat,

1) *The dictatorship of the proletariat as the instrument of the proletarian revolution* . The question of the proletarian dictatorship is above all a question of the main content of the proletarian revolution. The proletarian revolution, its movement, its sweep and its achievements acquire flesh and blood only through the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the instrument of the proletarian revolution, its organ, its most important mainstay, brought into being for the purpose of, firstly, crushing the resistance of the overthrown exploiters and consolidating the achievements of the proletarian revolution, and secondly, carrying the revolution to the complete victory of socialism. The revolution can defeat the bourgeoisie, can overthrow its power, even without the dictatorship of the proletariat. But the revolution will be unable to crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie, to maintain its victory and to push forward to the final victory of socialism unless, at a certain stage in its development, it creates a special organ in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat as its principle mainstay.
"The fundamental question of every revolution is the question of power" (Lenin). Does this mean that all that is required is to assume power, to seize it? No, it does not. The seizure of power is only the beginning. For many reasons, the bourgeoisie that is overthrown in one country remains for a long time stronger than the proletariat which has overthrown it. Therefore, the whole point is to retain power, to consolidate it, to make it invincible. What is needed to attain this? To attain this it is necessary to carry out at least three main tasks that confront the dictatorship of the proletariat "on the morrow" of victory:

a) to break the resistance of the landlords and capitalists who have been overthrown and expropriated by the revolution, to liquidate every attempt on their part to restore the power of capital;
b) to organize construction in such a way as to rally all the working people around the proletariat, and to carry on this work along the lines of preparing for the elimination, the abolition of classes;
c) to arm the revolution, to organize the army of the revolution for the struggle against foreign enemies, for the struggle against imperialism.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is needed to carry out, to fulfill these tasks.

"The transition from capitalism to communism," says Lenin, "represents an entire historical epoch. Until this epoch has terminated, the exploiters inevitably cherish the hope of restoration, and this *hope* is converted into *attempts* at restoration. And after their first serious defeat, the overthrown exploiters—who had not expected their overthrow, never believed it possible, never conceded the thought of it—throw themselves with energy grown tenfold, with furious passion and hatred grown a hundredfold, into the battle for the recovery of the 'paradise' of which they have been deprived, on behalf of their families, who had been leading such a sweet and easy life and whom now the 'common herd' is condemning to ruin and destitution (or to 'common labor...). In the train of the capitalist exploiters follow the broad masses of the petty bourgeoisie, with regard to whom decades of historical experience of all countries testify that they vacillate and hesitate, one day marching behind the proletariat and the next day taking fright at the difficulties of the revolution; that they become panic-stricken at the first defeat or semi-defeat of the workers, grow nervous, rush about, snivel, and run from one camp into the other" (see Vol. XXIII, p. 355).

The bourgeoisie has its grounds for making attempts at restoration, because for a long time after its overthrow it remains stronger than the proletariat which has overthrown it.

"If the exploiters are defeated in one country only" says Lenin, "and this, of course, is the typical case, since a simultaneous revolution in a number of countries is a rare exception, they *still* remain *stronger* than the exploited" (ibid., p. 354)

Wherein lies the strength of the overthrown bourgeoisie?
Firstly , "in the strength of international capital, in the strength and durability of the international connections of the bourgeoisie" (see Vol. XXV, p. 173).
Secondly , in the fact that "for a long time after the revolution the exploiters inevitably retain a number of great practical advantages: they still have money (it is impossible to abolish money all at once); some moveable property—often fairly considerable; they still have various connections, habits of organization and management, knowledge of all the 'secrets' (customs, methods, means and possibilities) of management, superior education, close connections with the higher technical personnel (who live and think like the bourgeoisie), incomparably greater experience in the art of war (this is very important), and so on, and so forth" (see Vol. XXIII, p. 354)
Thirdly , "in the *force of habit* , in the strength of *small production* . For, unfortunately, small production is still very, very widespread in the world, and small production *engenders* capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale"... for "the abolition of classes means only not only driving out the landlords and capitalists—that we accomplished with comparative ease—it also means *abolishing the small commodity producers* , and they *cannot be drive out* , or crushed; we *must live in harmony* with them, they can (and must) be remolded and re-educated only by very prolonged, slow, cautious organizational work (see Vol. XXV, pp.173 and 189).

That is why Lenin says:

"The dictatorship of the proletariat is a most determined and most ruthless war waged by the new class against a *more powerful enemy* , the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased *tenfold* by its overthrow,"

that "the dictatorship of the proletariat is a stubborn struggle—bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society" (ibid., pp. 173 and 190).
It scarcely needs proof that there is not the slightest possibility of carrying out these tasks in a short period, of accomplishing all this in a few years. Therefore, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the transition from capitalism

to communism, must not be regarded as a fleeting period of "super-revolutionary" acts and decrees, but as an entire historical era, replete with civil wars and external conflicts, with persistent organizational work and economic construction, with advances and retreats, victories and defeats. The historical era is needed not only to create the economic and cultural prerequisites for the complete victory of socialism, but also to enable the proletariat, firstly, to educate itself and become steeled as a force capable of governing the country, and, secondly, to reeducate and remold the petty-bourgeois strata along such lines as will assure the organization of socialist production.

Marx said to the workers:

"You will have to go through fifteen, twenty, fifty years of civil wars and international conflicts," Marx said to the workers, "not only to change existing conditions, but also to change yourselves and to make yourselves capable of wielding political power" (see K. Marx and F. Engels, *Works* , Vol. VIII, p. 506).

Continuing and developing Marx's idea still further, Lenin wrote that:

"It will be necessary under the dictatorship of the proletariat to re-educate millions of peasants and small proprietors, hundreds of thousands of office employees, officials and bourgeois intellectuals, to subordinate them all to the proletarian state and to proletarian leadership, to overcome their bourgeois habits and traditions," just as we must "in a protracted struggle waged on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat, re-educate the proletarians themselves, who do not abandon their petty-bourgeois prejudices at one stroke, by a miracle, at the bidding of the Virgin Mary, at the bidding of a slogan, resolution or decree, but only in the course of a long and difficult mass struggle against the mass petty-bourgeois influences" (see Vol. XXV, pp. 248 and 247).

2) *The dictatorship of the proletariat as the rule of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie* . From the foregoing it is evident that the dictatorship of the proletariat is not a mere change of personalities in the government, a change of the cabinet," etc., leaving the old economic and political order intact. The Mensheviks and the opportunists of all countries, who fear dictatorship like fire and in their fright substitute the concept "conquest of power" for the

concept of dictatorship, usually reduce the "conquest of power" to a change of the "cabinet," to the accession to power of a new ministry made up of people like Scheidemann and Noske, MacDonald and Henderson. It is hardly necessary to explain that these and similar cabinet changes have nothing in common with the dictatorship of the proletariat, with the conquest of real power by the real proletariat. With the MacDonalds and Scheidemanns in power, while the old bourgeois order is allowed to remain, their so-called governments cannot be anything else than an apparatus serving the bourgeoisie, a screen to conceal the ulcers of imperialism, a weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie against the revolutionary movement of the oppressed and exploited masses. Capital needs such governments as a screen when it finds it inconvenient, unprofitable, difficult to oppress and exploit the masses without the aid of a screen. Of course, the appearance of such governments is a symptom that "over there" (i.e., in the capitalist camp) all is not quite "at the Shipka Pass"; nevertheless, governments of this kind inevitably remain governments of capital in disguise. The government of a MacDonald or a Scheidemann is as far removed from the conquest of power by the proletariat as the sky from the earth. The dictatorship of the proletariat is not a change of government, but a new state, with new organs of power, both central and local; it is the state of the proletariat, which has arisen on the ruins of the old state, the state of the bourgeoisie.

The dictatorship of the proletariat arises not on the basis of the bourgeois order, but in the process of the breaking up of this order, after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, in the process of the expropriation of the landlords and capitalists, in the process of the socialization of the principal instruments and means of production, in the process of violent proletarian revolution. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a revolutionary power based on the use of force against the bourgeoisie.

The state is a machine in the hands of the ruling class for suppressing the resistance of its class enemies. *In this respect* the dictatorship of the proletariat does not differ essentially from the dictatorship of any other class, for the proletarian state is a machine for the suppression of the bourgeoisie. But there is one *substantial* difference. This difference consists in the fact that all hitherto existing class states have been dictatorships of an exploiting minority over the exploited majority, whereas

the dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of the exploited majority over the exploiting minority.

Briefly: *the dictatorship of the proletariat is the rule—unrestricted by law and based on force—of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, a rule enjoying the sympathy and support of the laboring and exploited masses* (Lenin, The State and Revolution).

From this follow two main conclusions:

First conclusion : The dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be "complete" democracy, democracy for all, for the rich as well as for the poor; the dictatorship of the proletariat "must be a state that is democratic *in a new way* (for the proletarians and the non-propertied in general) and dictatorial *in a new way* (*against* [18] the bourgeoisie)" (see Vol. XXI, p. 393). The talk of Kautsky and Co. about universal equality, about "pure" democracy, about "perfect" democracy, and the like, is a bourgeois disguise of the indubitable fact that equality between exploited and exploiters is impossible. The theory of "pure" democracy is the theory of the upper stratum of the working class, which has been broken in and is being fed by the imperialist robbers. It was brought into being for the purpose of concealing the ulcers of capitalism, of embellishing imperialism and lending it moral strength in the struggle against the exploited masses. Under capitalism there are no real "liberties" for the exploited, nor can there be, if for no reason than that the premises, printing plants, paper supplies, etc, indispensable for the enjoyment of "liberties" are the privilege of the exploiters. Under capitalism the exploited masses do not, nor can they ever, really participate in governing the country, if for no other reason than that, even under the most democratic regime, under conditions of capitalism, governments are not set up by the people but by the Rothschilds and Stinneses, the Rockefellers and Morgans. Democracy under capitalism is *capitalist* democracy, the democracy of the exploiting minority, based on the restriction of the rights of the exploited majority and directed against this majority. Only under the proletarian dictatorship are real liberties for the exploited and real participation of the proletarians and peasants in governing the country possible. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, democracy is *proletarian* democracy, the democracy of the exploited

majority, based on the restriction of the rights of the exploiting minority and directed against this minority.

Second conclusion : The dictatorship of the proletariat cannot arise as the result of the peaceful development of bourgeois society and of bourgeois democracy; it can arise only as the result of the smashing of the bourgeois state machine, the bourgeois army, the bourgeois bureaucratic apparatus, the bourgeois police.

"The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes," say Marx and Engels in a preface to the *Communist Manifesto* . The task of the proletarian revolution is "...no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, *but to smash it* … this is the preliminary condition for every real people's revolution on the continent," says Marx in his letter to Kugelmann in 1871. [19]

Marx's qualifying phrases about the continent gave the opportunists and Mensheviks of all countries a pretext for clamoring that Marx had thus conceded the possibility of the peaceful evolution of bourgeois democracy into a proletarian democracy, at least in certain countries outside the European continent (Britain, America). Marx did in fact concede that possibility, and he had good grounds for conceding it in regard to Britain and America in the seventies of the last century, when monopoly capitalism and imperialism did not yet exist, and when these countries, owing to the particular conditions of their development, had as much as yet no developed militarism and bureaucracy. That was the situation before the appearance of developed imperialism. But later, after a lapse of thirty or forty years, when the situation in these countries had radically changed, when imperialism had developed and had embraced all capitalist countries without exception, when militarism and bureaucracy had appeared in Britain and America also, when the particular conditions for peaceful development in Britain and America had disappeared—then the qualification in regard to these countries necessarily could no longer hold good.

"Today," said Lenin, "in 1917, in the epoch of the first great imperialist war, this qualification made by Marx is no longer valid. Both Britain and America, the biggest and the last representatives, in the whole world, of

Anglo-Saxon 'liberty' in the sense that they had no militarism and bureaucracy, have completely sunk into all-European filthy, bloody morass of bureaucratic-military institutions which subordinate everything to themselves and trample everything underfoot. Today, in Britain and in America, too, 'the preliminary condition for every real people's revolution' is the *smashing* , the *destruction* of the 'ready-made state machinery' (perfected in those countries, between 1914 and 1917, up to the 'European' general imperialist standard)" (see Vol. XXI, p. 395).

In other words, the law of violent proletarian revolution, the law of smashing of the bourgeois state machine as a preliminary condition for such a revolution, is an inevitable law of the revolutionary movement in the imperialist countries of the world.

Of course, in the remote future, if the proletariat is victorious in the principal capitalist countries, and if the present capitalist encirclement is replaced by a socialist encirclement, a "peaceful" path of development is quite possible for certain capitalist countries, whose capitalists, in view of the "unfavorable" international situation, will consider it expedient "voluntarily" to make supposition concessions to the proletariat. But this supposition applies only to a remote and possible future. With regard to the immediate future, there is no ground whatsoever for this supposition.

Therefore, Lenin is right in saying:

"The proletarian revolution is impossible without the forcible destruction of the bourgeois state machine and the substitution for it of a *new one* " (see Vol. XXIII, p. 342)

3) *Soviet power as the state form of the dictatorship of the proletariat* . The victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat signifies the suppression of the bourgeoisie, the smashing of the bourgeois state machine and the substitution of proletarian democracy for bourgeois democracy. That is clear. But by what means of organization can this colossal work be carried out? The old forms of organization of the proletariat, which grew up on the basis of bourgeois parliamentarism, are inadequate for this work, of that there can hardly be any doubt. What, then, are the new forms of organization of the proletariat that are capable of serving as the gravediggers of the bourgeois state machine, that are capable not only of smashing this machine, not only of substituting proletarian democracy for

bourgeois democracy, but also of becoming the foundation of the proletarian state power?

This new form of organization of the proletariat is the Soviets.

Wherein lies the strength of the Soviets as compared with the old forms of organization?

In that the Soviets are the most *all-embracing* mass organizations of the proletariat, for they and they alone embrace all workers without exception.

In that the Soviets are the *only* mass organizations which unite all the oppressed and exploited, workers and peasants, soldiers and sailors, and in which the vanguard of the masses, the proletariat, can, for this reason, most easily and most completely exercise its political leadership of the mass struggle.

In that the Soviets are the *most powerful organs* of the revolutionary struggle of the masses, of the political actions of the masses, of the uprising of the masses, organs capable of breaking the omnipotence of finance capital and its political appendages.

In that the Soviets are the *immediate* organizations of the masses themselves, i.e., they are *the most democratic* and therefore the most authoritative organizations of the masses, which facilitate to the utmost their participation in the work of building up the new state and in its administration, and which bring into full play the revolutionary energy, initiative and creative abilities of the masses in the struggle for the destruction of the old order, in the struggle for the new, proletarian order.

Soviet power is the union and constitution of the local Soviets into one common state organization, into the state organization of the proletariat as the vanguard of the oppressed and exploited masses and as the ruling class, their union in the Republic of the Soviets.

The essence of Soviet power consists in the fact that these most all-embracing and most revolutionary mass organizations of precisely those classes that were oppressed by the capitalist and landlords are now the " *permanent and sole* basis of the whole power of the state, of the whole state apparatus"; that "precisely those masses which even in the most democratic bourgeois republics," while being equal in law, "have in fact

been prevented by thousands of tricks and devices from taking part in political life and from enjoying democratic rights and liberties, are now drawn unfailingly into *constant* and, moreover, *decisive* participation in the democratic administration of the state". [20] (see Lenin, Vol. XXIV, p. 13).

That is why Soviet power is a *new form* of state organization, different in principle from the old bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary form, a *new* type of state, adapted not to the task of exploiting and oppressing the laboring masses, but to the task of completely emancipating them from all oppression and exploitation, to the tasks facing the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Lenin is right in saying that with the appearance of Soviet power "the era of bourgeois-democratic parliamentarism has drawn to a close and a new chapter in world history—the era of proletarian dictatorship—has been opened."

Wherein lies the characteristic features of Soviet power?

In that Soviet power is the most all-embracing and most democratic state organization of all possible state organizations while classes continue to exist; for, being the arena of the bond and collaboration between the workers and the exploited peasants in their struggle against the exploiters, and basing itself in its works on this bond and on this collaboration. Soviet power is thus the power of the majority of the population over the minority, it is the state of the majority, the expression of its dictatorship.

In that Soviet power is the most internationalist of all state organizations in class society, for, by destroying every kind of national oppression and resting on the collaboration of the laboring masses of the various nationalities, it facilitates the uniting of these masses into a single state union.

In that Soviet power, by its very structure, facilitates the task of leading the oppressed and exploited masses by the vanguard of these masses, by the proletariat, as the most united and most politically conscious core of the Soviets.

"The experience of all revolutions and of all movements of the oppressed classes, the experience of the world socialist movement teaches us," says Lenin, "that the proletariat alone is able to unite and lead the scattered and backward strata of the toiling and exploited population" (see Vol. XXIV, p. 14). The point is that the structure of Soviet power facilitates the practical application of the lessons drawn from this experience.

In that Soviet power, by combining legislative and executive power in a single state organization and replacing territorial electoral constituencies by industrial units, factories and mills, thereby directly linking the workers and the laboring masses in general with the apparatus of state administration, teaches them how to govern the country.

In that Soviet power alone is capable of releasing the army from its subordination to bourgeois command and of converting it from the instrument of oppression of the people which it is under the bourgeois order into an instrument for the liberation of the people from the yoke of the bourgeoisie, both native and foreign.

In that "the Soviet organization of the state alone is capable of immediately and effectively smashing and finally destroying the old, i.e., the bourgeois, bureaucratic and judicial apparatus" (ibid)

In that the Soviet form of state alone, by drawing the mass organizations of the toilers and exploited into constant and unrestricted participation in state administration, is capable of preparing the ground for the withering away of the state, which is one of the basic elements of the future stateless communist society.

The Republic of Soviets is thus the political form, so long sought and finally discovered, within the framework of which the economic emancipation of the proletariat, the complete victory of socialism, must be accomplished.

The Paris Commune was the embryo of this form; Soviet power is its development and culmination.

That is why Lenin says:

"The Republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies is not only the form of a higher type of democratic institution...but is the *only* [21] form capable of ensuring the most painless transition to socialism" (see Vol. XXII, p. 131).

Chapter 5: The Peasant Question

From this theme I take four questions:

a) the presentation of the question;
b) the peasantry during the bourgeois-democratic revolution;
c) the peasantry during the proletarian revolution;
d) the peasantry after the consolidation of Soviet power.

1) *The presentation of the question.* Some think that the fundamental thing in Leninism is the peasant question, that the point of departure of Leninism is the question of the peasantry, of its role, its relative importance. This is absolutely wrong. The fundamental question of Leninism, its point of departure, is not the peasant question, but the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the conditions under which it can be achieved, of the conditions under which it can be consolidated. The peasant question, as the question of the ally of the proletariat in its struggle for power, is a derivative question.

This circumstance, however, does not in the least deprive the peasant question of the serious and vital importance it unquestionably has for the proletarian revolution. It is known that the serious study of the peasant question in the ranks of Russian Marxists began precisely on the eve of the first revolution (1905), when the question of overthrowing tsarism and of realizing the hegemony of the proletariat confronted the Party in all its magnitude, and when the question of the ally of the proletariat in the impending bourgeois revolution became of vital importance. It is also known that the peasant question in Russia assumed a still more urgent character during the proletarian revolution, when the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of achieving and maintaining it, led to the question of allies for the proletariat in the impending proletarian revolution. And this was natural. Those who are marching towards and preparing to assume power cannot but be interested in the question of who are their real allies.

In this sense the peasant question is part of the general question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and as such it is one of the most vital problems of Leninism.

The attitude of indifference and sometimes even outright aversion displayed by the parties of the Second International towards the peasant question is to be explained not only by the specific conditions of development in the West. It is to be explained primarily by the fact that these parties do not believe in the proletarian dictatorship, that they fear revolution and have no intention of leading the proletariat to power. And those who are afraid of revolution, who do not intend to lead the proletarians to power, cannot be interested in the question of allies for the proletariat in the revolution—to them the question of allies is one of indifference, of no immediate significance. The ironical attitude of the heroes of the Second International towards the peasant question is regarded by them as a sign of good breeding, a sign of "true" Marxism. As a matter of fact, there is not a grain of Marxism in this, for indifference towards so important a question as the peasant question on the eve of the proletarian revolution is the reverse side of the repudiation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, it is an unmistakable sign of downright betrayal of Marxism.

The question is as follows: Are the revolutionary potentialities latent in the peasantry by virtue of certain conditions of its existence *already exhausted,* or not; and if not, *is there any hope, any basis,* for utilizing these potentialities for the proletarian revolution, for transforming the peasantry, the exploited majority of it, from the reserve of the bourgeoisie which it was during the bourgeois revolutions in the West and still is even now, into a reserve of the proletariat, into its ally?

Leninism replies to this question in the affirmative, i.e., it recognises the existence of revolutionary capacities in the ranks of the majority of the peasantry, and the possibility of using these in the interests of the proletarian dictatorship.

The history of the three revolutions in Russia fully corroborates the conclusion of Leninism on this score.

Hence the practical conclusion that the toiling masses of the peasantry must be supported in their struggle against bondage and exploitation, in their struggle for deliverance from oppression and poverty. This does not mean, of course, that the proletariat must support *every* peasant movement. What we have in mind here is support for a movement or struggle of the peasantry which, directly or indirectly, facilitates the emancipation movement of the proletariat, which, in one way or another, brings grist to the mill of the proletarian revolution, and which helps to transform the peasantry into a reserve and ally of the working class.

2) *The peasantry during the bourgeois-democratic revolution.* This period extends from the first Russian revolution (1905) to the second revolution (February 1917), inclusive. The characteristic feature of this period is the emancipation of the peasantry from the influence of the liberal bourgeoisie, the peasantry's *desertion* of the Cadets, its *turn* towards the proletariat, towards the Bolshevik Party. The history of this period is the history of the struggle between the Cadets (the liberal bourgeoisie) and the Bolsheviks (the proletariat) for the peasantry. The outcome of this struggle was decided by the Duma period, for the period of the four Dumas served as an object lesson to the peasantry, and this lesson brought home to the peasantry the fact that they would receive neither land nor liberty at the hands of the Cadets; that the tsar was wholly in favor of the landlords, and that the Cadets were supporting the tsar; that the only force they could rely on for assistance was the urban workers, the proletariat. The imperialist war merely confirmed the lessons of the Duma period and consummated the peasantry's desertion of the bourgeoisie, consummated the isolation of the liberal bourgeoisie; for the years of the war revealed the utter futility, the utter deceptiveness of all hopes of obtaining peace from the tsar and his bourgeois allies. Without the object lessons of the Duma period, the hegemony of the proletariat would have been impossible.

That is how the alliance between the workers and the peasants in the bourgeois-democratic revolution took shape. That is how the hegemony (leadership) of the proletariat in the common struggle for the overthrow of tsarism took shape—the hegemony which led to the February Revolution of 1917.

The bourgeois revolutions in the West (Britain, France, Germany, Austria) took, as is well known, a different road. There, hegemony in the revolution belonged not to the proletariat, which by reason of its weakness did not and could not represent an independent political force, but to the liberal bourgeoisie. There the peasantry obtained its emancipation from feudal regimes, not at the hands of the proletariat, which was numerically weak and unorganized, but at the hands of the bourgeoisie. There the peasantry marched against the old order side by side with the liberal bourgeoisie. There the peasantry acted as the reserve of the bourgeoisie. There the revolution, in consequence of this, led to an enormous increase in the political weight of the bourgeoisie.

In Russia, on the contrary, the bourgeois revolution produced quite opposite results. The revolution in Russia led not to the strengthening, but to the weakening of the bourgeoisie as a political force, not to an increase in its political reserve, but to the loss of its main reserve, to the loss of the peasantry. The bourgeois revolution in Russia brought to the forefront not the liberal bourgeoisie but the revolutionary proletariat, rallying around the latter the millions of the peasantry.

Incidentally, this explains why the bourgeois revolution in Russia passed into a proletarian revolution in a comparatively short space of time. The hegemony of the proletariat was the embryo of, and the transitional stage to, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

How is this peculiar phenomenon of the Russian revolution, which has no precedent in the history of the bourgeois revolutions of the West, to be explained? Whence this peculiarity?

It is to be explained by the fact that the bourgeois revolution unfolded in Russia under more advanced conditions of class struggle than in the West; that the Russian proletariat had at that time already become an independent political force, whereas the liberal bourgeoisie, frightened by the revolutionary spirit of the proletariat, lost all semblance of revolutionary spirit (especially after the lessons of 1905) and turned towards an alliance with the tsar and the landlords against the revolution, against the workers and peasants.

We should bear in mind the following circumstances, which determined the peculiar character of the Russian bourgeois revolution.

a) The unprecedented concentrations of Russian industry on the eve of the revolution. It is known, for instance, that in Russia 54 percent of all the workers were employed in enterprises employing over 500 workers each, whereas in a country as highly developed as the United States of America no more than 33 percent of all the workers were employed in such enterprises. It scarcely needs proof that these circumstances alone, in view of the existence of a revolutionary party like the Party of the Bolsheviks, transformed the working class of Russia into an immense force in the political life of the country.

b) The hideous forms of exploitation in the factories, coupled with the intolerable police regime of the tsarist henchmen, a circumstance which transformed every important strike of the workers into an imposing political action and steeled the working class as a force that was revolutionary to the end.

c) The political flabbiness of the Russian bourgeoisie, which after the Revolution of 1905 turned into servility to tsarism and downright counter-revolution—a fact to be explained not only by the revolutionary spirit of the Russian proletariat, which flung the Russian bourgeoisie into the embrace of tsarism, but also by the direct dependence of this bourgeoisie upon government contracts.

d) The existence in the countryside of the most hideous and most intolerable survivals of serfdom, coupled with the unlimited power of the landlord, a circumstance which threw the peasantry into the embrace of the revolution.

e) Tsarism, which stifled everything that was alive, and whose tyranny aggravated the oppression of the capitalist and the landlord, a circumstance which united the struggle of the workers and peasants into a single torrent of revolution.

f) The imperialist war, which fused all these contradictions in the political life of Russia into a profound revolutionary crisis, and which lent the revolution tremendous striking force.

To whom could the peasantry turn under these circumstances? From whom could it seek support against the unlimited power of the landlords, against the tyranny of the tsar, against the devastating war which was ruining it? From the liberal bourgeoisie? But it was an enemy, as the long years of experience of all four Dumas had proved. From the Socialist-Revolutionaries? The Socialist-Revolutionaries were "better" than the Cadets, of course, and their programme was "suitable," almost a peasant programme; but what could the Socialist-Revolutionaries offer, considering that they thought of relying only on the peasants and were weak in the towns, from which the enemy primarily drew its forces? Where was the new force which would stop at nothing either in town or country, which would boldly march in the front ranks to fight the tsar and the landlords, which would help the peasantry to extricate itself from bondage, from land hunger, from oppression, from war? Was there such a force in Russia at all? Yes, there was. It was the Russian proletariat, which had shown its strength, its ability to fight to the end, its boldness and revolutionary spirit, as far back as 1905.

At any rate, there was no other such force; nor could any other be found anywhere.

That is why the peasantry, when it turned its back on the Cadets and attached itself to the Socialist-Revolutionaries, at the same time came to realize the necessity of submitting to the leadership of such a courageous leader of the revolution as the Russian proletariat.

Such were the circumstances which determined the peculiar character of the Russian bourgeois revolution.

3) *The peasantry during the proletarian revolution.* This period extends from the February Revolution of 1917 to the October Revolution of 1917. This period is comparatively short, eight months in all; but from the point of view of the political enlightenment and revolutionary training of the masses these eight months can safely be put on a par with whole decades of ordinary constitutional development, for they were eight months of *revolution.* This characteristic feature of this period was the further of this period was the further revolutionization of the peasantry, its disillusionment with the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the peasantry's *desertion* of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, its new turn toward a direct rally around the proletariat as the only consistently revolutionary force capable of leading the country to peace. The history of this period is the history of the struggle between the Socialist-Revolutionaries (petty-bourgeois democracy) and the Bolsheviks (proletarian democracy) for the peasantry, to win over the majority of the peasantry. The outcome of this struggle was decided by the coalition period, the Kerensky period, the refusal of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks to confiscate the landlords' land, the fight of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to continue the war, the June offensive at the front, the introduction of capital punishment for soldiers, the Kornilov revolt.

Whereas before, in the preceding period, the basic question had been the overthrow of the tsar and of the power of the landlords, now, in the period following the February Revolution, when there was no longer any tsar, and when the interminable war had exhausted the economy of the country and utterly ruined the peasantry, the question of liquidating the war became the main problem of the revolution. The center of gravity had manifestly shifted

from purely internal questions to the main question, the war. "End the war," "Let's get out of the war"—such was the general outcry of the war-weary nation and primarily of the peasantry.

But in order to get out of the war it was necessary to overthrow the Provisional Government, it was necessary to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie, it was necessary to overthrow the power of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, for they, and they alone, were dragging out the war to a "victorious finish." Practically, there was no way of getting out of the war except by overthrowing the bourgeoisie.

There was a new revolution, a proletarian revolution, for it ousted from power the last group of the imperialist bourgeoisie, its extreme Left wing, the Socialist-Revolutionary Party and the Mensheviks, in order to set up a new, proletarian power, the power of the Soviets, in order to put in power the party of the revolutionary proletariat, the Bolshevik Party, the party of the revolutionary struggle against the imperialist war and for a democratic peace. The majority of the peasantry supported the struggle of the workers for peace, for the power of the Soviets.

There was no other way out for the peasantry. Nor could there be any other way out.

Thus, the Kerensky period was a great object lesson for the toiling masses of the peasantry, for it showed clearly that with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in power the country could not extricate itself from the war, and the peasants would never get either land or liberty; that the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries differed from the Cadets only in their honeyed phrases and false premises, while they actually pursued the same imperialist, Cadet policy; that the only power that could lead the country on to the proper road was the power of the Soviets. The further prolongation of the war merely confirmed the truth of this lesson, spurred on the revolution, and drove millions of peasants and soldiers to *rally directly* around the proletarian revolution. The isolation of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks became an incontrovertible fact.

Without the object lessons of the coalition period the dictatorship of the proletariat would have been impossible.

Such were the circumstances which facilitated the process of the bourgeois revolution passing into the proletarian revolution.

That is how the dictatorship of the proletariat took shape in Russia.

4) *The peasantry after the consolidation of Soviet power.* Whereas before, in the first period of the revolution, the main objective was the overthrow of tsarism, and later, after the February Revolution, the primary objective was to get out of the imperialist war by overthrowing the bourgeoisie, now, after the liquidation of the civil war and the consolidation of Soviet power, questions of economic construction came to the forefront. Strengthen and develop the nationalized industry; for this purpose link up industry with peasant economy through state-regulated trade; replace the surplus-appropriation system by the tax in kind so as, later on, by gradually lowering the tax in kind, to reduce matters to the exchange of products of industry for the products of peasant farming; revive trade and develop the cooperatives, drawing into them the vast masses of the peasantry—this is how Lenin outlined the immediate tasks of economic construction on the way to building the foundations of socialist economy.

It is said that this task may prove beyond the strength of a peasant country like Russia. Some skeptics even say that it is simply utopian, impossible, for the peasantry is a peasantry, it consists of small producers, and therefore cannot be of use in organizing the foundations of socialist production.

But the skeptics are mistaken, for they fail to take into account certain circumstances which in the present case are of decisive significance. Let us examine the most important of these:

Firstly, The peasantry in the Soviet Union must not be confused with the peasantry in the West. A peasantry that has been schooled in three revolutions, that fought against the tsar and the power of the bourgeoisie

side by side with the proletariat and under the leadership of the proletariat, a peasantry that has received land and peace at the hands of the proletarian revolution and by reason of this has become the reserve of the proletariat—such a peasantry cannot but be different from a peasantry which during the bourgeois revolution fought under the leadership of the liberal bourgeoisie, which received land at the hands of that bourgeoisie, and in view of this became the reserve of the bourgeoisie. It scarcely needs proof that the Soviet peasantry, which has learnt to appreciate its political friendship and political collaboration with the proletariat and which owes its freedom to this friendship and collaboration, cannot but represent exceptionally favorable material for economic collaboration with the proletariat.

Engels said that "the conquest of political power by the Socialist Party has become a matter of the not too distant future," that "in order to conquer political power this Party must first go from the towns to the country, must become a power in the countryside" (see Engels, *The Peasant Question* , 1922 ed. [22]). He wrote this in the nineties of the last century, having in mind the Western peasantry. Does it need proof that the Russian Communists, after accomplishing an enormous amount of work in this field in the course of three revolutions, have already succeeded in gaining in the countryside an influence and backing the likes of which our Western comrades dare not even dream of? How can it be denied that these circumstances must decidedly facilitate the organization of economic collaboration between the working class and the peasantry of Russia?

The skeptics maintain that the small peasants are a factor that is incompatible with socialist construction. But listen to what Engels says about the small peasants of the West:

"We are decidedly on the side of the small peasant; we shall do everything at all permissible to make his lot more bearable, to facilitate his transition to the cooperative should he decide to do so, and even to make it possible for him to remain on his small holding for a protracted length of time to think the matter over, should he still be unable to bring himself to this decision. We do this not only because we consider the small peasant who does his own work as virtually belonging to us, but also in the direct interest of the

Party. The greater the number of peasants whom we can save from being actually hurled down into the proletariat, whom we can win to our side while they are still peasants, the more quickly and easily the social transformation will be accomplished. It will not serve us to wait with this transformation until capitalist production has developed everywhere to its utmost consequences, until the last small handicraftsman and last small peasant have fallen victim to capitalist large-scale production. The material sacrifices to be made for this purpose in the interest of the peasants and to be defrayed out of public funds can, from the point of view of capitalist economy, be viewed only as money thrown away, but it is nevertheless an excellent investment because it will effect a perhaps tenfold saving in the cost of the social reorganization in general. In this sense we can, therefore, afford to deal very liberally with the peasants" (*ibid.*).

That is what Engels said, having in mind the Western peasantry. But is it not clear that what Engels said can nowhere be realized so easily and so completely as in the land of the dictatorship of the proletariat? Is it not clear that only in Soviet Russia is it possible at once and to the fullest extent for "the small peasant who does his own work" to come over to our side, for the "material sacrifices" necessary for this to be made, and for the necessary "liberality towards the peasants" to be displayed? Is it not clear that these and similar measures for the benefit of the peasantry are already being carried out in Russia? How can it be denied that this circumstance, in its turn, must facilitate and advance the work of economic construction in the land of the Soviets?

Secondly, Agriculture in Russia must not be confused with agriculture in the West. There, agriculture is developed along the ordinary lines of capitalism, under conditions of profound differentiation among the peasantry, with large landed estates and private capitalist latifundia at one extreme and pauperism, destitution and wage slavery at the other. Owing to this, disintegration and decay are quite natural there. Not so in Russia. Here agriculture cannot develop along such a path, if for no other reason than that the existence of Soviet power and the nationalization of the principal instruments and means of production preclude such a development. In Russia the development of agriculture must proceed along a different path,

along the path of organizing millions of small and middle peasants in cooperatives, along the path of developing in the countryside a mass cooperative movement supported by the state by means of preferential credits. Lenin rightly pointed out in his articles on cooperation that the development of agriculture in our country must proceed along a new path, along the path of drawing the majority of the peasants into socialist construction through the cooperatives, along the path of gradually introducing into agriculture the principles of collectivism, first in the sphere of marketing and later in the sphere of production of agriculture products.

Of extreme interest in this respect are several new phenomena observed in the countryside in connection with the work of the agricultural cooperatives. It is well known that new, large organizations have sprung up within the Selskosoyuzl, [23] in different branches of agriculture, such as production of flax, potatoes, butter, etc., which have a great future ahead of them . Of these, the Flax Center, for instance, unites a whole network of peasant flax growers' associations. The Flax Centre supplies the peasants with seeds and implements; then it buys all the flax produced by these peasants, disposes of it on the market on a large scale, guarantees the peasants a share in the profits, and in this way links peasant economy with state industry through the Selskosoyouz. What shall we call this form of organization of production? In my opinion, it is the domestic system of large-scale state-socialist production in the sphere of agriculture. In speaking of the domestic system of state-socialist production I do so by analogy with the domestic system under capitalism, let us say, in the textile industry, where the handicraftsman received their raw material and tools from the capitalist and turned over to him the entire product of their labor, thus being in fact semi-wage earners working in their own homes. This is one of numerous indices showing the path along which our agriculture must develop. There is no need to mention here similar indices in other branches of agriculture.

It scarcely needs proof that the vast majority of the peasantry will eagerly take this new path of development, rejecting the path of private capitalist latifundia and wage slavery, the path of destitution and ruin.

Here is what Lenin says about the path of development of our agriculture:

"State power over all large-scale means of production, state power in the hands of the proletariat, the alliance of this proletariat with the many millions of small and very small peasants, the assured leadership of the peasantry by the proletariat, etc., is not this all that is necessary for building a complete socialist society from the cooperatives from the cooperatives alone, which we formerly looked upon as huckstering and which from a certain aspect we have the right to look down upon as such now, under the NEP? Is this not all that is necessary for building a complete socialist society? This is not yet the building of socialist society, but it is all that is necessary and sufficient for this building" (see Vol. XXVII, p. 392).

Further on, speaking of the necessity of giving financial and other assistance to the cooperatives, as a "new principal of organizing the population" and a new "social system" under the dictatorship of the proletariat, Lenin continues:

"Every social system arises only with the financial assistance of a definite class. There is no need to mention the hundreds and hundreds of millions of rubles that the birth of 'free' capitalism cost. Now we must realize, and apply in our practical work, the fact that the social system which we must now give more than usual assistance is the cooperative system. But it must be assisted in the real sense of the word, i.e., it will not be enough to interpret assistance to mean assistance for any kind of cooperative trade; by assistance we must mean assistance for cooperative trade in which *really large masses of the population really take part* " (*ibid* ., p. 393).

What do all these facts prove?

That the skeptics are wrong.

Leninism is right in regarding the masses of laboring peasants as the reserve of the proletariat.

That the proletariat in power can and must use this reserve in order to link industry with agriculture, to advance socialist construction, and to provide for the dictatorship of the proletariat that necessary foundation without which the transition to socialist economy is impossible.

Chapter 6: The National Question

From this theme I take two main questions:

a) the presentation of the question;
b) the liberation movement of the oppressed peoples and the proletarian revolution.

1) *The presentation of the question.* During the last two decades the national question has undergone a number of very important changes. The national question in the period of the Second International and the national question in the period of Leninism are far from being the same thing. They differ profoundly from each other, not only in their scope, but also in their intrinsic character.

Formerly, the national question was usually confined to a narrow circle of questions, concerning, primarily, "civilized" nationalities. The Irish, the Hungarians, the Poles, the Finns, the Serbs, and several other European nationalities—that was the circle of unequal peoples in whose destinies the leaders of the Second International were interested. The scores and hundreds of millions of Asiatic and African peoples who are suffering national oppression in its most savage and cruel form usually remained outside of their field of vision. They hesitated to put white and black, "civilized" and "uncivilized" on the same plane. Two or three meaningless, lukewarm resolutions, which carefully evaded the question of liberating the colonies—that was all the leaders of the Second International could boast of. Now we can say that this duplicity and half-heartedness in dealing with the national question has been brought to an end. Leninism laid bare this crying incongruity, broke down the wall between whites and blacks, between European and Asiatics, between the "civilized" and "uncivilized" slaves of imperialism, and thus linked the national question with the question of the colonies. The national question was thereby transformed from a particular and internal state problem into a general and international

problem, into a world problem of emancipating the oppressed peoples in the dependent countries and colonies from the yoke of imperialism.

Formerly, the principle of self-determination of nations was usually misinterpreted, and not infrequently it was narrowed down to the idea of the right of nations to autonomy. Certain leaders of the Second International even went so far as to turn the right to self-determination into the right to cultural autonomy, i.e., the right of oppressed nations to have their own cultural institutions, leaving all political power in the hands of the ruling nation. As a consequence, the idea of self-determination stood in danger of being transformed from an instrument for combating annexations into an instrument for justifying them. Now we can say that this confusion has been cleared up. Leninism broadened the conception of self-determinism, interpreting it as the right of the oppressed peoples of the dependent countries and colonies to complete secession, as the right of nations to independent existence as states. This precluded the possibility of justifying annexations by interpreting the right to self-determinism as the right to autonomy. Thus, the principle of self-determinism itself was transformed from an instrument for deceiving the masses, which it undoubtedly was in the hands of the social-chauvinists during the imperialist war, into an instrument for exposing all imperialist aspirations and chauvinist machinations, into an instrument for the political education of the masses in the spirit of internationalism.

Formerly, the question of the oppressed nations was usually regarded as purely a juridical question. Solemn proclamations about "national equality of rights," innumerable declarations about the "equality of nations"—that was the stock-in-trade of the parties of the Second International, which glossed over the fact that "equality of nations" under imperialism, where one group of nations (a minority) lives by exploiting another group of nations, is sheer mockery of the oppressed nations. Now we can say that this bourgeois-juridical point of view on the national question has been exposed. Leninism brought the national question down from the lofty heights of high-sounding declarations to solid ground, and declared that pronouncements about the "equality of nations" not backed by the direct support of the proletarian parties for the liberation struggle of the oppressed

nations are meaningless and false. In this way the question of the oppressed nations becomes one of supporting the oppressed nations, of rendering real and continuous assistance to them in their struggle against imperialism for real equality of nations, for their independent existence as states.

Formerly, the national question was regarded from a reformist point of view, as an independent question having no connection with the general question of the power of capital, of the overthrow of imperialism, of the proletarian revolution. It was tacitly assumed that the victory of the proletariat in Europe was possible without a direct, alliance with the liberation movement in the colonies, that the national-colonial question could be solved on the quiet, "of its own accord," off the highway of the proletarian revolution, without a revolutionary struggle against imperialism. Now we can say that the anti-revolutionary point of view has been exposed. Leninism has proved, and the imperialist war and the revolution in Russia has confirmed, that the national question can be solved only in connection with and on the basis of the proletarian revolution, and that the road to victory of the revolution in the West lies through the revolutionary alliance with the liberation movement of the colonies and dependent countries against imperialism. The national question is a part of the general question of the proletarian revolution, a part of the question of the dictator of the proletariat.

The question is as follows: Are the revolutionary potentialities latent in the revolutionary liberation movement of the oppressed countries *already exhausted* , or not; and if not, is there any hope, any basis, for utilizing these potentialities for the proletarian revolution, for transforming the dependent and colonial countries from a reserve of the imperialist bourgeoisie into a reserve of the revolutionary proletariat, into an ally of the latter?

Leninism replies to this question in the affirmative, i.e., it recognises the existence of revolutionary capacities in the national liberation movement of the oppressed countries, and the possibility of using these for overthrowing the common enemy, for overthrowing imperialism. The mechanics of the development of imperialism, the imperialist war and the revolution in Russia wholly confirm the conclusions of Leninism on this score.

Hence the necessity for the proletariat of the "dominant" nations to support, resolutely and actively, the national liberation movement of the oppressed and dependent peoples.

This does not mean, of course, that the proletariat must support *every* national movement, everywhere and always, in every individual concrete case. It means that support must be given to such national movements that tend to weaken, to overthrow imperialism, and not to strengthen and preserve it. Cases occur when the national movements in certain oppressed countries come into conflict with the interests of the development of the proletarian movement. In such cases support is, of course, entirely out of the question. The question of the rights of nations is not an isolated, self-sufficient question; it is a part of the general problem of the proletarian revolution, subordinate to the whole, and must be considered from the point of view of the whole. In the forties of the last century Marx supported the national movement of the Poles and Hungarians and was opposed to the national movement of the Czechs and the South Slavs. Why? Because the Czechs and the South Slavs were then "reactionary peoples," "Russian outposts" in Europe, outposts of absolutism; whereas the Poles and the Hungarians were "revolutionary peoples," fighting against absolutism. Because support of the national movement of the Czechs and the South Slavs was at that time equivalent to indirect support for tsarism, the most dangerous enemy of the revolutionary movement in Europe.

"The various demands of democracy," writes Lenin, "including self-determination, are not an absolute, but a *small part* of the general democratic (now: general socialist) *world* movement. In individual concrete cases, the part may contradict the whole, if so, it must be rejected" (see Vol. XIX, pp. 257-58).

This is the position in regard to the question of particular national movements, of the possible reactionary character of these movements—if, of course, they are appraised not from the formal point of view, not from the point of view of abstract rights, but concretely, from the point of view of the interests of the revolutionary movement.

The same must be said of the revolutionary character of national movements in general. The unquestionably revolutionary character of the vast majority of national movements is as relative and peculiar as is the possible revolutionary character of certain particular national movements. The revolutionary character of a national movement under the conditions of imperialist oppression does not necessarily presuppose the existence of proletarian elements in the movement, the existence of a revolutionary or a republican programme of the movement, the existence of a democratic basis of the movement. The struggle that the Emir of Afghanistan is waging for the independence of Afghanistan is objectively a *revolutionary* struggle, despite the monarchist views of the Emir and his associates, for it weakens, disintegrates and undermines imperialism; whereas the struggle waged by such "desperate" democrats and "Socialists," "revolutionaries" and republicans as, for example, Kerensky and Tsereteli, Renaudel and Scheidemann, Chernov and Dan, Henderson and Clynes, during the imperialist war was a *reactionary* struggle, for its results was the embellishment, the strengthening, the victory, of imperialism. For the same reasons, the struggle that the Egyptians merchants and bourgeois intellectuals are waging for the independence of Egypt is objectively a *revolutionary* struggle, despite the bourgeois origin and bourgeois title of the leaders of Egyptian national movement, despite the fact that they are opposed to socialism; whereas the struggle that the British "Labour" Government is waging to preserve Egypt's dependent position is for the same reason a *reactionary* struggle, despite the proletarian origin and the proletarian title of the members of the government, despite the fact that they are "for" socialism. There is no need to mention the national movement in other, larger, colonial and dependent countries, such as India and China, every step of which along the road to liberation, even if it runs counter to the demands of formal democracy, is a steam-hammer blow at imperialism, i.e., is undoubtedly a *revolutionary* step.

Lenin was right in saying that the national movement of the oppressed countries should be appraised not from the point of view of formal democracy, but from the point of view of the actual results, as shown by the general balance sheet of the struggle against imperialism, that is to say, "not in isolation, but on a world scale" (see Vol. XIX, p. 257).

2) *The liberation movement of the oppressed peoples and the proletarian revolution* . In solving the national question Leninism proceeds from the following theses:

a) the world is divided into two camps: the camp of a handful of civilized nations, which possess finance capital and exploit the vast majority of the population of the globe; and the camp of the oppressed and exploited peoples in the colonies and dependent countries, which constitute the majority;

b) the colonies and the dependent countries, oppressed and exploited by finance capital, constitute a vast reserve and a very important source of strength for imperialism;

c) the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed peoples in the dependent and colonial countries against imperialism is the only road that leads to their emancipation from oppression and exploitation;

d) the most important colonial and dependent countries have already taken the path of the national liberation movement, which cannot but lead to the crisis of world capitalism;

e) the interests of the proletarian movement in the developed countries and of the national liberation movement in the colonies call for the union of these two forms of the revolutionary movement into a common front against the common enemy, against imperialism;

f) the victory of the working class in the developed countries and the liberation of the oppressed peoples from the yoke of imperialism are impossible without the formation and the consolidation of a common revolutionary front;

g) the formation of a common revolutionary front is impossible unless the proletariat of the oppressor nations renders direct and determined support to the liberation movement of the oppressed peoples against the imperialism of its "own country," for "no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations" (*Engels*);

h) this support implies the upholding defense and implementation of the slogan of the right of nations to secession, to independent existence as states;

i) unless this slogan is implemented, the union and collaboration of nations within a single world economic system, which is the material basis for the victory of world socialism, cannot be brought about;

j) this union can only be voluntary, arising on the basis of mutual confidence and fraternal relations among peoples.

Hence the two sides, the two tendencies in the national question: the tendency towards political emancipation from the shackles of imperialism and towards the formation of an independent national state—a tendency which arose as a consequence of imperialist oppression and colonial exploitation; and the tendency towards closer economic relations among nations, which arose as a result of the formation of the world market and a world economic system.

"Developing capitalism," says Lenin, "knows two historical tendencies in the national question. First: the awakening of national life and national movements, struggle against all national oppression, creation of national states. Second: development and acceleration of all kinds of intercourse between nations, breakdown of national barriers, creation of the international unity of capital, of economic life in general, of politics, science, etc.

"Both tendencies are a world-wide law of capitalism. The first predominates at the beginning of its development, the second characterizes mature capitalism that is moving towards its transformation into socialist society" (see Vol. XVII, pp. 139-40).

For imperialism these two tendencies represent irreconcilable contradictions; because imperialism cannot exist without exploiting colonies and forcibly retaining them within the framework of the "integral whole"; because imperialism can bring nations together only by means of

annexations and colonial conquest, without which imperialism is, generally speaking, inconceivable.

For communism, on the contrary, these tendencies are but two sides of a single cause—the cause of the emancipation of the oppressed people from the yoke of imperialism; because communism knows that the union of peoples in a single world economic system is possible only in the basis of mutual confidence and voluntary agreement, and that road to the formation of a voluntary union of peoples lies through the separation of the colonies from the "integral" imperialist "whole," through the transformation of the colonies into independent states.

Hence the necessity for a stubborn, continuous and determined struggle against the dominant-nation chauvinism of the "Socialist" of the ruling nations (Britain, France, America, Italy, Japan, etc.), who do not want to fight their imperialist governments, who do not want to support the struggle of the oppressed peoples in "their" colonies for emancipation from oppression, for secession.

Without such a struggle the education of the working class of the ruling nations in the spirit of true internationalism, in the spirit of closer relations with the toiling masses of the dependent countries and colonies, in the spirit of real preparation for the proletarian revolution, is inconceivable. The revolution would not have been victorious in Russia and Kolchak and Denikin would not have been crushed, had not the Russian proletariat enjoyed the sympathy and support of the oppressed peoples of the former Russian Empire. But to win the sympathy and support of these peoples it had first of all to break the fetters of Russian imperialism and free these people from the yoke of national oppression.

Without this it would have been impossible to consolidate Soviet power, to implant real internationalism and to create that remarkable organization for the collaboration of peoples which is called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and which is the living prototype of the future union of peoples in a single world economic system.

Hence the necessity of fighting against the national isolationism, narrowness and aloofness of the Socialist in the oppressed countries, who do not want to rise above their national parochialism and who do not understand the connection between the liberation movement in their own countries and the proletarian movement in the ruling countries.

Without such a struggle it is inconceivable that the proletariat of the oppressed nations can maintain an independent policy and its class solidarity with the proletariat of the ruling countries in the fight for the overthrow of the common enemy, in the fight for the overthrow of imperialism.

Without such a struggle, internationalism would be impossible.

Such is the way in which the toiling masses of the dominant and of the oppressed nations must be educated in the spirit of revolutionary internationalism.

Here is what Lenin says about this twofold task of communism in educating the workers in the spirit of internationalism:

"Can such education…be *concretely identical* in great, oppressing nations and in small, oppressed nations, in annexing nations and in annexed nations?

"Obviously not. The way to the one goal—to complete equality, to the closest relations and the subsequent *amalgamation of all nations* — obviously proceeds here by different routes in each concrete case; in the same way, let us say, as the route to a point in the middle of a given page lies towards the left from one edge and towards the right from the opposite edge. If a Social-Democrat belonging to a great, oppressing, annexing nation, while advocating the amalgamation of nations in general, were to forget even for one moment that 'his' Nicholas II, 'his' Wilhelm, George, Poincare, etc., *also stands for amalgamation* with small nations (by means

of annexations)—Nicholas II being for 'amalgamation' with Galicia, Wilhelm II for 'amalgamation' with Belgium, etc ., such a Social-Democrat would be a ridiculous doctrinaire in theory and an abettor of imperialism in practice.

"The weight of emphasis in the internationalist education of the workers in the oppressing countries must necessarily consist in their advocating and upholding freedom of secession for oppressed countries. Without this there can be *no* internationalism. It is our right and duty to treat every Social-Democrat of an oppressing nation who *fails* to conduct such propaganda as an imperialist and a scoundrel. This is an absolute demand, even if the *chance* of secession being possible and 'feasible' before the introduction of socialism is one in a thousand….

"On the other hand, a Social-Democrat belonging to a small nation must emphasize in his agitation the *second* word of our general formula: 'voluntary *union* ' of nations. He may, without violating his duties as an internationalist, be in favor of *either* the political independence of his nation or its inclusion in a neighboring state X,Y,Z, etc. But in all cases he must fight *against* small-nation narrow-mindedness, isolationism and aloofness, he must fight for the recognition of the whole and the general, for the subordination of the interests of the particular to the interests of the general.

"People who have not gone thoroughly into the question think there is a 'contradiction' in Social-Democrats of oppressing nations insisting on 'freedom of *secession* ,' while Social-Democrats of oppressed nations insist on 'freedom of *union* .' However, a little reflection will show that there is not, and cannot be, any *other* road leading from the given situation to internationalism and the amalgamation of nations, any other road to this goal" (see Vol. XIX, pp. 261-62).

Chapter 7: Strategy and Tactics

From this theme I take six questions:

a) strategy and tactics as the science of leadership in the class struggle of the proletariat;
b) stages of the revolution, and strategy;
c) the ebb and flow of the movement, and tactics;
d) strategic leadership;
e) tactical leadership;
f) reformism and revolutionism.

1) *Strategy and tactics as the science of leadership in the class struggle of the proletariat.* The period of the domination of the Second International was mainly a period of the formation and training of the proletarian political armies under conditions of more or less peaceful development. It was the period of parliamentarism as the predominant form of the class struggle. Questions of great class conflicts, of preparing the proletariat for revolutionary clashes, of the means of achieving the dictatorship of the proletariat, did not seem to be on the order of the day at that time. The task was confined to utilizing all means of legal development for the purpose of forming and training the proletarian armies, to utilizing parliamentarism in conformity with the conditions under which the status of the proletariat remained, and, as it seemed, had to remain, that of an opposition. It scarcely needs proof that in such a period and with such a conception of the tasks of the proletariat there could be neither an integral strategy nor any elaborated tactics. There were fragmentary and detached ideas about tactics and strategy, but no tactics or strategy as such.

The mortal sin of the Second International was not that it pursued at that time the tactics of utilizing parliamentary forms of struggle, but that it overestimated the importance of these forms, that it considered them virtually the only forms; and that when the period of open revolutionary battles set in and the question of extra-parliamentary forms of struggle came

to the fore, the parties of the Second International turned their backs on these new tasks, refused to shoulder them.

Only in the subsequent period, the period of direct action by the proletariat, the period of proletarian revolution, when the question of overthrowing the bourgeoisie became a question of immediate practical action; when the question of the reserves of the proletariat (strategy) became one of the most burning questions; when all forms of struggle and of organization, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary (tactics), had quite clearly manifested themselves—only in this period could an integral strategy and elaborated tactics for the struggle of the proletariat be worked out. It was precisely in this period that Lenin brought out into the light of day the brilliant ideas of Marx and Engels on tactics and strategy that were suppressed by the opportunists of the Second International. But Lenin did not confine himself to restoring particular tactical propositions of Marx and Engels. He developed them further and supplemented them with new ideas and propositions, combining them all into a system of rules and guiding principles for the leadership of the class struggle of the proletariat. Lenin's pamphlets, such as *What Is To Be Done?, Two Tactics, Imperialism, The State and Revolution, The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky, "Left Wing" Communism,* undoubtedly constitute priceless contributions to the general treasury of Marxism, to its revolutionary arsenal. The strategy and tactics of Leninism constitute the science of leadership in the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat.

2) *Stages of the revolution, and strategy* . Strategy is the determination of the direction of the main blow of the proletariat at a given stage of the revolution, the elaboration of a corresponding plan for the disposition of the revolutionary forces (main and secondary reserves), the fight to carry out this plan throughout the given stage of the revolution.

Our revolution had already passed through two stages, and after the October Revolution it entered a third one. Our strategy changed accordingly.

First stage . 1903 to February 1917. Objective: to overthrow tsarism and completely wipe out the survivals of medievalism. The main force of the

revolution: the proletariat. Immediate reserves: the peasantry. Direction of the main blow: the isolation of the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie, which was striving to win over the peasantry and liquidate the revolution by a *compromise* with tsarism. Plan for the disposition of forces: alliance of the working class with the peasantry. "The proletariat must carry to completion the democratic revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush by force the resistance of the autocracy and to paralyze the instability of the bourgeoisie" (see Lenin, Vol. VIII, p. 96)

Second stage . March 1917 to October 1917. Objective: to overthrow imperialism in Russia and to withdraw from the imperialist war. The main force of the revolution: the proletariat. Immediate reserves: the poor peasantry. The proletariat of neighboring countries as probable reserves. The protracted war and the crisis of imperialism as a favorable factor. Direction of the main blow: isolation of the petty-bourgeois democrats (Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries), who were striving to win over the toiling masses of the peasantry and to put an end to the revolution by a *compromise* with imperialism. Plan for the disposition of forces: alliance of the proletariat with the poor peasantry. "The proletariat must accomplish the socialist revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the semi-proletarian elements of the population in order to crush by force the resistance of the bourgeoisie and to paralyze the instability of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie" (*ibid* .).

Third stage . Began after the October Revolution. Objective: to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat in one country, using it as a base for the defeat of imperialism in all countries. The revolution spreads beyond the confines of one country; the epoch of world revolution has begun. The main force of the revolution: the dictatorship of the proletariat in one country, the revolutionary movement of the proletariat in all countries. Main reserves: the semi-proletarian and small-peasant masses in the developed countries, the liberation movement of the colonies and dependent countries. Direction of the main blow: isolation of the petty-bourgeois democrats, isolation of the parties of the Second International, which constitute the main support of the policy of *compromise* with imperialism. Plan for the disposition of

forces: alliance of the proletarian revolution with the liberation movement in the colonies and the dependent countries.

Strategy deals with the main forces of the revolution and their reserves. It changes with the passing of the revolution from one stage to another, but remains basically unchanged throughout a given stage.

3) *The flow and ebb of the movement, and tactics* . Tactics are the determination of the line of conduct of the proletariat in the comparatively short period of the flow or ebb of the movement, of the rise or decline of the revolution, the fight to carry out this line by means of replacing old forms of struggle and organization by new ones, old slogans by new ones, by combining these forms, etc. While the object of strategy is to win the war against tsarism, let us say, or against the bourgeoisie, to carry through the struggle against tsarism or against the bourgeoisie to its end, tactics pursue less important objects, for their aim is not the winning of the war as a whole, but the winning of some particular engagements or some particular battles, the carrying through successfully of some particular campaigns or actions corresponding to the concrete circumstances in the given period of rise or decline of the revolution. Tactics are a part of strategy, subordinate to it and serving it.

Tactics change according to flow and ebb. While the strategic plan remained unchanged during the first stage of the revolution (1903 to February 1917), tactics changed several times during that period. In the period from 1903 to 1905 the Party pursued offensive tactics, for the tide of the revolution was rising, the movement was on the upgrade, and tactics had to proceed from this fact. Accordingly, the forms of struggle were revolutionary, corresponding to the requirements of the rising tide of the revolution. Local political strikes, political demonstrations, the general political strike, boycott of the Duma, uprising, revolutionary fighting slogans, such were the successive forms of the struggle during that period. These changes in the forms of struggle were accomplished by corresponding changes in the forms of organization. Factory committees, revolutionary peasant committees, strike committees, Soviets of workers'

deputies, a workers' party operating more or less openly, such were the forms of organization during that period.

In the period from 1907 to 1912 the Party was compelled to resort to tactics of retreat; for we then experienced a decline in the revolutionary movement, the ebb of the revolution, and tactics necessarily had to take this fact into consideration. The forms of struggle, as well as the forms of organization, changed accordingly: instead of the boycott of the Duma-participation in the Duma; instead of open revolutionary actions outside the Duma-actions and work in the Duma; instead of general political strikes, partial economic strikes, or simply a lull in activities. Of course, the Party had to go underground that period, while the revolutionary mass organizations were replaced by cultural, educational, cooperative, insurance and other legal organizations.

The same must be said of the second and third stages of the revolution, during which tactics changed dozens of times, whereas the strategic plans remained unchanged.

Tactics deal with the forms of struggle and the forms of organization of the proletariat, with their changes and combinations. During a given stage of the revolution tactics may change several times, depending on the flow or ebb, the rise or decline of the revolution.

4) *Strategic leadership* . The reserves of the revolution can be:

Direct : a) the peasantry and in general the intermediate strata of the population within the country; b) the proletariat of neighboring countries; c) the revolutionary movement in the colonies and dependent countries; d) the conquests and gains of the dictatorship of the proletariat, part of which the proletariat may give up temporarily, while retaining superiority of forces, in order to buy off a powerful enemy and gain a respite; and

Indirect : a) the contradictions and conflicts among the non-proletarian classes within the country, which can be utilized by the proletariat to

weaken the enemy and to strengthen its own reserves; b) contradictions, conflicts and wars (the imperialist war, for instance) among the bourgeois states hostile to the proletarian state, which can be utilized by the proletariat in its offensive or in maneuvering in the event of a forced retreat.

There is no need to speak at length about the reserves of the first category, as their significance is clear to everyone. As for the reserves of the second category, whose significance is not clear, it must be said that sometimes they are of prime importance for the progress of the revolution. One can hardly deny the enormous importance, for example, of the conflicts between the petty-bourgeois democrats (Socialist-Revolutionaries) and the liberal-monarchists bourgeoisie (the Cadets) during and after the first revolution, which undoubtedly played its part in freeing the peasantry from the influence of the bourgeoisie. Still less reason is there for denying the colossal importance of the fact that the principal groups of imperialists were engaged in a deadly war during the period of the October Revolution, when the imperialist, engrossed in war among themselves, were unable to concentrate their forces against the young Soviet power, and the proletariat for this very reason, was able to get down to work of organizing its forces and consolidating its power, and to prepare the rout of Kolchak and Denikin. It must be presumed that now, when the contradictions among the imperialist groups are becoming more and more profound, and when a new war among them is becoming inevitable, reserves of this description will assume ever greater importance for the proletariat.

The task of strategic leadership is to make proper use of all these reserves for the achievement of the main object of the revolution at the given stage of its development.

What does making proper use of reserves mean?

It means fulfilling certain necessary conditions, of which the following must be regarded as the principal ones:

Firstly , The concentration of the main forces of the revolution at the enemy's most vulnerable spot at the decisive moment, when the revolution has already become ripe, when the offensive is going full-steam ahead, when insurrection is knocking at the door, and when bringing the reserves up to the vanguard is the decisive condition of success. The party's strategy during the period from April to October 1917 can be taken as an example of this manner of utilizing reserves. Undoubtedly, the enemy's most vulnerable spot at that time was the war. Undoubtedly, it was on this question, as the fundamental one, that the Party rallied the broadest masses of the population around the proletarian vanguard. The Party's strategy during that period was, while training the vanguard for street action by means of manifestations and demonstrations, to bring the reserves up to the vanguard through the medium of Soviets in the rear and the soldiers' committees at the front. The outcome of the revolution has shown that the reserves were properly utilized.

Here is what Lenin, paraphrasing the well-known theses of Marx and Engels on insurrection, says about this condition of the strategic utilization of the forces of the revolution:

"1) Never *play* with insurrection, but when beginning it firmly realize that you must *go to the end* .
"2) Concentrate a *great superiority of forces* at the decisive point, at the decisive moment, otherwise the enemy, who has the advantage of better preparation and organization, will destroy the insurgents.
"3) Once the insurrection has begun, you must act with the greatest *determination* , and by all means, without fail, take the *offensive* . ‘The defensive is the death of every armed uprising.’
"4) You must try to take the enemy by surprise and seize the moment when his forces are scattered.
"5) You must strive for *daily* success, even if small (one might say hourly, if it is the case of one town), and at all costs retain the ' *moral ascendancy* '" (see Vol. XXI, pp. 319-20).

Secondly , The selection of the moment for the decisive blow, of the moment for starting the insurrection, so timed as to coincide with the

moment when the crisis has reached its climax, when it is already the case that the vanguard is prepared to fight to the end, the reserves are prepared to support the vanguard, and maximum consternation reigns in the ranks of the enemy.

The decisive battle, says Lenin, may be deemed to have fully matured if " (1) all the class forces hostile to us have become sufficiently entangled, are sufficiently at loggerheads, have sufficiently weakened themselves in a struggle which is beyond their strength"; *if* "(2) all the vacillating, wavering, unstable, intermediate elements—the petty bourgeois, the petty-bourgeois democrats as distinct from the bourgeoisie—have sufficiently exposed themselves in the eyes of the people, have sufficiently disgraced themselves through their practical bankruptcy"; *if* "(3) among the proletariat a mass sentiment in favor of supporting the most determined, supremely bold, revolutionary action against the bourgeoisie has arisen and begun vigorously to grow. Then revolution is indeed ripe; then, indeed, if we have correctly gauged all the conditions indicated above...and if we have chosen the moment rightly, our victory is assured" (see Vol. XXV, p.229)

The manner in which the October uprising was carried out may be taken as a model of such strategy.

Failure to observe this condition leads to a dangerous error called "loss of tempo," when the Party lags behind the movement or runs far ahead of it, courting the danger of failure. An example of such "loss of tempo," of how the moment for an uprising should not be chosen, may be seen in the attempt made by a section of our comrades to begin the uprising by arresting the Democratic Conference in September 1917, when wavering was still apparent in the Soviets, when the armies at the front were still at the crossroads, when the reserves had not yet been brought up to the vanguard.

Thirdly , Undeviating pursuit of the course adopted, no matter what difficulties and complications are encountered on the road towards the goal; this is necessary in order that the vanguard may not lose sight of the main goal of the struggle and that the masses may not stray from the road while

marching towards that goal and striving to rally around the vanguard. Failure to observe this condition leads to a grave error, well known to sailors as "losing one's bearing." As an example of this "losing one's bearings." We may take the erroneous conduct of our Party when, immediately after the Democratic Conference, it adopted a resolution to participate in the Pre-parliament. For the moment the Party, as it were, forgot that the Pre-parliament was an attempt of the bourgeoisie to switch the country from the path of the Soviets to the path of bourgeois parliamentarism, that the Party's participation in such a body might result in mixing everything up and confusing the workers and peasants, who were waging a revolutionary struggle under the slogan: "All Power to the Soviets." This mistake was rectified by the withdrawal of the Bolsheviks from the Pre-parliament.

Fourthly , Maneuvering the reserves with a view to effecting a proper retreat when the enemy is strong, when retreat is inevitable, when to accept battle forced upon us by the enemy is obviously disadvantageous, when, with the given relation of forces, retreat becomes the only way to escape a blow against the vanguard and to retain the reserves for the latter.

"The revolutionary parties," says Lenin, “must complete their education. They have learned to attack. Now they have to realize that this knowledge must be supplemented with the knowledge how to retreat properly. They have to realize—and the revolutionary class is taught to realize it by its own bitter experience—that victory is impossible unless they have learned both how to attack and how to retreat properly" (see Vol. XXV, p. 177)

The object of this strategy is to gain time to disrupt the enemy, and to accumulate forces in order to later assume the offensive.

The signing of the Brest Peace may be taken as a model of this strategy, for it enabled the Party to gain time, to take advantage of the conflicts in the camp of the imperialists, to disrupt the forces of the enemy, to retain the support of the peasantry, and to accumulate forces in preparation for the offensive against Kolchak and Denikin.

"In concluding a separate peace," said Lenin at that time, "we free ourselves as much *as it is possible at the present moment* from both warring imperialist groups, we take advantage of their mutual enmity and warfare, which hinder them from making a deal against us, and for a certain period have our hands free to advance and to consolidate the socialist revolution" (see Vol. XXII, p. 198).

"Now even the biggest fool," said Lenin three years after the Brest Peace, can see "that the 'Brest Peace' was a concession that strengthened us and broke up the forces of international imperialism" (see Vol. XXVII, p. 7)

Such are the principal conditions which ensure correct strategic leadership.

5) *Tactical leadership* . Tactical leadership is a part of strategic leadership, subordinated to the tasks and the requirements of the latter. The task of tactical leadership is to master all forms of struggle and organization of the proletariat and to ensure that they are used properly so as to achieve, with the given relations of forces, the maximum results necessary to prepare for strategic success.

What is meant by making proper use of the forms of struggle and organization of the proletariat?

It means fulfilling certain necessary conditions, of which the following must be regarded as the principal ones:

Firstly , To put in the forefront precisely those forms of struggle and organization which are best suited to the conditions prevailing during the flow or ebb of the movement at a given moment, and which therefore can facilitate and ensure the bringing of the masses to the revolutionary positions, the bringing of the millions to the revolutionary front, and their disposition at the revolutionary front.

The point here is not that the vanguard should realize the impossibility of preserving the old regime and the inevitability of its overthrow. The point is that the masses, the millions, should understand this inevitability and display their readiness to support the vanguard. But the masses can understand this only from their own experience. The task is to enable the vast masses to realize from their own experience the inevitability of the overthrow of the old regime, to promote such methods of struggle and forms of organizations as will make it easier for the masses to realize from experience the correctness of the revolutionary slogans.

The vanguard would have become detached from the working class, and the working class would have lost contact with the masses, if the Party had not decided as the time to participate in the Duma, if it had not decided to concentrate its forces on work in the Duma and to develop a struggle on the basis of this work, in order to make it easier for the masses to realize from their own experience the futility of the Duma, the falsity of the promises of the Cadets, the impossibility of compromise with tsarism, and the inevitability of an alliance between the peasantry and the working class. Had the masses not gained their experience during the period of the Duma, the exposure of the Cadets and the hegemony of the proletariat would have been impossible.

The danger of the "Otzovist" tactics was that they threatened to detach the vanguard from the millions of its reserves.

The Party would have become detached from the working class, and the working class would have lost its influence among the broad masses of the peasants and soldiers, if the proletariat had followed the "Left" Communists, who called for an uprising in April 1917, when the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries had not yet exposed themselves as advocates of war and imperialism, when the masses had not yet realized from their own experience the falsity of speeches of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries about peace, land and freedom. Had the masses not gained this experience during the Kerensky period, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries would not have been isolated and the dictatorship

of the proletariat would have been impossible. Therefore, the tactics of "patiently explaining" the mistakes of the petty-bourgeois parties and of open struggle in the Soviets were the only correct tactics.

The danger of the tactics of the "Left" Communists was that they threatened to transform the Party from the leader of the proletarian revolution into a handful of futile conspirators with no ground to stand on.

"Victory cannot be won with the vanguard alone," says Lenin. "To throw the vanguard alone into the decisive battle, before the whole class, before the broad masses have taken up a position either of direct support of the vanguard, or at least of benevolent neutrality towards it...would be not merely folly but a crime. And in order that the whole class, that the broad masses of the working people and those oppressed by capital may take up such a position, propaganda and agitation alone are not enough. For this the masses must have their own political experience. Such is the fundamental law of all great revolutions, now confirmed with astonishing force and vividness not only in Russia but also in Germany. Not only the uncultured, often illiterate masses of Russia, but the highly cultured, entirely literate masses of Germany had to realize through their own painful experience the absolute impotence and spinelessness, the absolute helplessness and servility to the bourgeoisie, the utter vileness, of the government of the knights of the Second International, the absolute inevitability of a dictatorship of the extreme reactionaries (Kornilov in Russia, Kapp and Co. in Germany) as the only alternatives to a dictatorship of the proletariat, in order to turn resolutely towards communism" (see Vol. XXV, p. 228)

Secondly , To locate at any given moment the particular link in the chain of processes which, if grasped, will enable us to keep hold of the whole chain and to prepare the conditions for achieving strategic success.

The point here is to single out from all the tasks confronting the Party the particular immediate task, the fulfillment of which constitutes the central point, and the accomplishment of which ensures the successful fulfillment of the other immediate tasks.

The importance of this thesis may be illustrated by two examples, one of which could be taken from the remote past (the period of the formation of the Party) and the other from the immediate present (the period of the NEP).

In the period of the formation of the Party, when the innumerable circles and organizations had not yet been linked together, when amateurishness and the parochial outlook of the circles were corroding the Party from top to bottom, when ideological confusion was the characteristic feature of the internal life of the Party, the main link and the main task in the chain of links and in the chain of tasks then confronting the Party proved to be the establishment of an all-Russian illegal newspaper (*Iskra*). Why? Because, under the conditions then prevailing, only by means of an all-Russian illegal newspaper was it possible to create a solid core of the Party capable to create a solid core of the Party capable of uniting the innumerable circles and organizations into one whole, to prepare the conditions for ideological and tactical unity, and thus to build the foundations for the formation of a real party.

During the period of transition from war to economic construction, when industry was vegetating in the grip of disruption and agriculture was suffering from a shortage of urban manufactured goods, when the establishment of a bond between state industry and peasant economy became the fundamental condition for successful socialist construction, in that period it turned out that the main link in the chain of processes, the main task among a number of tasks, was to develop trade. Why? Because under the conditions of the NEP the bond between industry and peasant economy cannot be established except through trade; because under the conditions of the NEP production without sale is fatal for industry; because industry can be expanded only by the expansion of sales as a result of developing trade; because only after we have consolidated our position in the sphere of trade, only after we have secured control of trade, only after we have secured this link can be there be any hope of linking industry with the peasant market and successfully fulfilling the other immediate tasks in order to create the conditions for building the foundations of socialist economy.

"It is not enough to be a revolutionary and an adherent of socialism or a Communist in general," says Lenin. "One must be able at each particular moment to find the particular link in the chain which one must grasp with all one's might in order to keep hold of the whole chain and to prepare firmly for the transition to the next link."...

"At the present time...this link is the revival of internal *trade* under proper state regulation (direction). Trade, that is the 'link' in the historical chain of events, in the transitional forms of our socialist construction in 1921-22, ' *which we must grasp with all our might* '..." (see Vol. XXVII, p. 82)

Such are the principal conditions which ensure correct tactical leadership.

6) *Reformism and revolutionism* . What is the difference between revolutionary tactics and reformist tactics?

Some think that Leninism is opposed to reforms, opposed to compromises and to agreements in general. This is absolutely wrong. Bolsheviks know as well as anybody else that in a certain sense "every little helps," that under certain conditions reforms in general, and compromises and agreements in particular, are necessary and useful.

"To carry on a war for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie," says Lenin, "a war which is a hundred times more difficult, protracted, and complicated than the most stubborn of ordinary wars between states, and to refuse beforehand to maneuver, to utilize the conflict of interests (even though temporary) among one's enemies, to reject agreements and compromises with possible (even though temporary, unstable, vacillating and conditional) allies—is not this ridiculous in the extreme? Is it not as though, when making a difficult ascent of an unexplored and hitherto inaccessible mountain, we were to refuse beforehand ever to move in zigzags, ever to retrace our steps, ever to abandon the course once selected and to try others?" (see Vol. XXV, p. 210).

Obviously, therefore, it is not a matter of reforms or of compromises and agreements, but of the use people make of reforms and agreements.

To a reformist, reforms are everything, while revolutionary work is something incidental, something just to talk about, mere eyewash. That is why, with reformist tactics under the conditions of bourgeois rule, reforms are inevitably transformed into an instrument for strengthening that rule, an instrument for disintegrating the revolution.

To a revolutionary, on the contrary, the main thing is revolutionary work and not reforms; to him reforms are a byproduct of the revolution. That is why, with revolutionary tactics under the conditions of bourgeois rule, reforms are naturally transformed into an instrument for strengthening the revolution, into a strongpoint for the further development of the revolutionary movement.

The revolutionary will accept a reform in order to use it as an aid in combining legal work with illegal work to intensify, under its cover, the illegal work for the revolutionary preparation of the masses for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

That is the essence of making revolutionary use of reforms and agreements under the conditions of imperialism.

The reformist, on the contrary, will accept reforms in order to renounce all illegal work, to thwart the preparation of the masses for the revolution and to rest in the shade of "bestowed" reforms.

That is the essence of reformist tactics.

Such is the position in regard to reforms and agreements under the conditions of imperialism.

The situation changes somewhat, however, after the overthrow of imperialism, under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Under certain conditions, in a certain situation, the proletarian power may find itself compelled temporarily to leave the path of the revolutionary reconstruction of the existing order of things and to take the path of its gradual transformation, the "reformist path," as Lenin says in his well-known article "The Importance of Gold," [24] the path of flanking movements, of reforms and concessions to the non-proletarian classes—in order to disintegrate these classes, to give the revolution a respite, to recuperate one's forces and prepare the conditions for a new offensive. It cannot be denied that in a sense this is a "reformist" path. But it must be borne in mind that there is a fundamental distinction here, which consists in the fact that in this case the reform emanates from the proletarian power, it strengthens the proletarian power, it procures for it a necessary respite, its purpose is to disintegrate, not the revolution, but the non-proletarian classes.

Under such conditions a reform is thus transformed into its opposite.

The proletarian power is able to adopt such a policy because, and only because, the sweep of the revolution in the preceding period was great enough and therefore provided a sufficiently wide expanse within which to retreat, substituting for offensive tactics the tactics of temporary retreat, the tactics of flanking movements.

Thus, while formerly, under bourgeois rule, reforms were a byproduct of revolution, now under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the source of reforms is the revolutionary gains of the proletariat, the reserves accumulated in the hands of the proletariat consisting of these gains.

"Only Marxism," says Lenin, "has precisely and correctly defined the relation of reforms to revolution. However, Marx was able to see this relation only from one aspect, namely, under the conditions preceding the first to any extant permanent and lasting victory of the proletariat, if only in a single country. Under those conditions, the basis of the proper relations was: reforms are a byproduct of the revolutionary class struggle of the

proletariat... After the victory of the proletariat, if only in a single country, something new enters into the relation between reforms and revolution. In principal, it is the same as before, but a change in form takes place, which Marx himself could not foresee, but which can be appreciated only on the basis of the philosophy and politics of Marxism...After the victory (while still remaining a 'byproduct' on an international scale) they (i.e., reforms-*J.St* .) are, in addition, for the country in which victory has been achieved, a necessary and legitimate respite in those cases when, after the utmost exertion of effort, it becomes obvious that sufficient strength is lacking for the revolutionary accomplishment of this or that transition. Victory creates such a 'reserve of strength' that it is possible to hold out even in a forced retreat, to hold out both materially and morally" (see Vol. XXVII, pp. 84-85).

Chapter 8: The Party

In the pre-revolutionary period, the period of more or less peaceful development, when the parties of the Second International were the predominant force in the working-class movement and parliamentary forms of struggle were regarded as the principal forms—under these conditions the Party neither had nor could have had that great and decisive importance which it acquired afterwards, under conditions of open revolutionary clashes. Defending the Second International against attacks made upon it, Kautsky says that the parties of the Second International are an instrument of peace and not of war, and that for this very reason they were powerless to take any important steps during the war, during the period of revolutionary action by the proletariat. That is quite true. But what does it mean? It means that the parties of the Second International are unfit for the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, that they are not militant parties of the proletariat, leading the workers to power, but election machines adapted for parliamentary elections and parliamentary struggle. This, in fact, explains why, in the days when the opportunists of the Second International were in the ascendancy, it was not the party but its parliamentary group that was the chief political organization of the proletariat. It is well known that the party at that time was really an appendage and subsidiary of the parliamentary group. It scarcely needs proof that under such circumstances and with such a party at the helm there could be no question of preparing the proletariat for revolution.

But matters have changed radically with the dawn of the new period. The new period is one of open class collisions, of revolutionary action by the proletariat, of proletarian revolution, a period when forces are being directly mustered for the overthrow of imperialism and the seizure of power by the proletariat. In this period the proletariat is confronted with new tasks, the tasks of reorganizing all party work on new, revolutionary lines; of educating the workers in the spirit of revolutionary struggle for power; of preparing and moving up reserves; of establishing an alliance with the

proletarians of neighboring countries; of establishing firm ties with the liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries, etc., etc. To think that these new tasks can be performed by the old Social-Democratic parties, brought up as they were in the peaceful conditions of parliamentarism, is to doom oneself to hopeless despair, to inevitable defeat. If, with such tasks to shoulder, the proletariat remained under the leadership of the old parties, it would be completely unarmed. It scarcely needs proof that the proletariat could not consent to such a state of affairs.

Hence the necessity for a new party, a militant party, a revolutionary party, one bold enough to lead the proletarians in the struggle for power, sufficiently experienced to find its bearings amidst the complex conditions of a revolutionary situation, and sufficiently flexible to steer clear of all submerged rocks in the path to its goal.

Without such a party it is useless even to think of overthrowing imperialism, of achieving the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This new party is the party of Leninism.

What are the specific features of this new party?

1) *The Party as the advanced detachment of the working class.* The Party must be, first of all, the *advanced* detachment of the working class. The Party must absorb all the best elements of the working class, their experience, their revolutionary spirit, their selfless devotion to the cause of the proletariat. But in order that it may really be the armed detachment, the Party must be armed with revolutionary theory, with a knowledge of the laws of the movement, with a knowledge of the laws of revolution. Without this it will be incapable of directing the struggle of the proletariat, of leading the proletariat. The Party cannot be a real party if it limits itself to registering what the masses of the working class feel and think, if it drags at the tail of the spontaneous movement, if it is unable to overcome the inertia and the political indifference of the spontaneous movement, if it is unable to rise above the momentary interests of the proletariat, if it is unable to raise

the masses to the level of understanding the class interests of the proletariat. The Party must stand at the head of the working class; it must see farther than the working class; it must lead the proletariat, and not drag at the tail of the spontaneous movement. The parties of the Second International, which preach "khvostism," are vehicles of bourgeois policy, which condemns the proletariat to the role of a tool in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Only a party which adopts the standpoint of advanced detachment of the proletariat and is able to raise the masses to the level of understanding the class interest of the proletariat, only such a party can divert the working class from the path of trade unionism and convert it into an independent political force.

The Party is the political leader of the working class.

I have already spoken of the difficulties of the struggle of the working class, of the complicated conditions of the struggle, of strategy and tactics, of reserves and maneuvering, of attack and retreat. These conditions are no less complicated, if not more so, than the conditions of war. Who can see clearly in these conditions, who can give correct guidance to the proletarian millions? No army at war can dispense with an experienced General Staff if it does not want to be doomed to defeat. Is it not clear that the proletariat can still less dispense with such a General Staff if it does not want to allow itself to be devoured by its mortal enemies? But where is this General Staff? Only the revolutionary party of the proletariat can serve as this General Staff. The working class without a revolutionary party is an army without a General Staff.

The Party is the General Staff of the proletariat.

But the Party cannot be only an *advanced* detachment. It must at the same time be a detachment of the *class* , part of the class, closely bound up with it by all the fibers of its being. The distinction between the advanced detachment and the rest of the working class, between Party members and non-Party people, cannot disappear until classes disappear; it will exist as long as the ranks of the proletariat continue to be replenished with former members of other classes, as long as the working class as a whole is not in a position to rise to the level of the advanced detachment. But the Party

would cease to be a party of this distinction developed into a gap, if the Party turned in on itself and became divorced from the non-Party masses. The Party cannot lead the class if it is not connected with the non-Party masses, if there is no bond between the Party and the non-Party masses, if these masses do not accept its leadership, if the Party enjoys no moral and political credit among the masses.

Recently two hundred thousand new members from the ranks of the workers were admitted into our Party. The remarkable thing about this is the fact that these people did not merely join the Party themselves, but were rather sent there by all the rest of the non-Party workers, who took an active part in the admission of the new members, and without whose approval no new member was accepted. This fact shows that the broad masses of non-Party workers regard our Party as *their* Party, as a Party *near* and *dear* to them, in whose expansion and consolidation they are vitally interested and to whose leadership they voluntarily entrust their destiny. It scarcely needs proof that without these intangible moral threads which connect the Party with the non-Party masses, the Party could not have become the decisive force of its class.

The Party is an inseparable part of the working class.

"We," says Lenin, "are the Party of a class, and therefore *almost the whole class* (and in times of war, in the period of civil war, the whole class) should act under the leadership of our Party, should adhere to our Party as closely as possible. But it would be Manilovism and 'khvostosm' to think that at any time under capitalism almost the whole class, or the whole class, would be able to rise to the level of consciousness and activity of its advanced detachment, of its Social-Democratic Party. No sensible Social-Democrat has ever yet doubted that under capitalism even the trade union organizations (which are more primitive and more comprehensible to the undeveloped strata) are unable to embrace almost the whole, or the whole, working class. To forget the distinction between the advanced detachment and the whole of the masses which gravitate towards it, to forget the constant duty of the advanced detachment to *raise* ever wider strata to this most advanced level, means merely to deceive oneself, to shut one's eyes to

the immensity of our tasks, and to narrow down these tasks" (see Vol. VI, pp. 205-06).

2) The Party as the organized detachment of the working class. The Party is not only the *advanced* detachment of the working class. If it desires really to direct the struggle of the class it must at the same time be the *organized* detachment of its class. The Party's tasks under the conditions of capitalism are immense and extremely varied. The Party must direct the struggle of the proletariat under the exceptionally difficult conditions of internal and external development; it must lead the proletariat in the offensive when the situation calls for an offensive; it must lead the proletariat so as to escape the blow of a powerful enemy when the situation calls for retreat; it must imbue the millions of unorganized non-Party workers with the spirit of organization and endurance. But the Party can fulfill these tasks only if it is itself the embodiment of discipline and organization, if it is itself the *organized* detachment of the proletariat. Without these conditions there can be no question of the Party really leading the vast masses of the proletariat.

The Party is the organized detachment of the working class.

The conception of the Party as an organized whole is embodied in Lenin's well-known formulation of the first paragraph of our Party Rules, in which the Party is regarded as the *sum total* of its organizations, and the Party member as a member of one of the organizations of the Party. The Mensheviks, who objected to this formulation as early as 1903, proposed to substitute for it a "system" of self-enrollment in the Party, a "system" of conferring the "title" of Party member upon every "professor" and "high-school student," upon every "sympathizer" and "striker" who supported the Party in one way or another, but who did not join and did not want to join any one of the Party organizations. It scarcely needs proof that had this singular "system" become entrenched in our Party it would inevitably have led to our Party becoming inundated with professors and high-school students and to its degeneration into a loose, amorphous, disorganized "formation," lost in a sea of "sympathizers," that would have obliterated the dividing line between the Party and the class and would have upset the Party's task of raising the unorganized masses to the level of the advanced

detachment. Needless to say, under such an opportunist "system" our Party would have been unable to fulfill the role of the organizing core of the working class in the course of our revolution.

"From the point of view of Comrade Martov," says Lenin, "the border-line of the Party remains quite indefinite, for 'every striker' may 'proclaim himself a Party member.' What is the use of this vagueness? A wide extension of the 'title.' Its harm is that it introduces a *disorganising* idea, the confusion of class and Party" (see Vol. VI, p. 211)

But the Party is not merely the *sum total* of Party organizations. The Party is at the same time a single *system* of these organizations, their formal union into a single whole, with higher and lower leading bodies, with subordination of the minority to the majority, with practical decisions binding on all members of the Party. Without these conditions the Party cannot be a single organized whole capable of exercising systematic and organized leadership in the struggle of the working class.

" *Formerly* ," says Lenin, "our Party was not a formally organized whole, but only the sum of separate groups, and therefore no other relations except those of ideological influence were possible between these groups. *Now* we have become an organized Party, and this implies the establishment of authority, the transformation of the power of ideas into the power of authority, the subordination of lower Party bodies to higher Party bodies" (see Vol. VI, p. 291).

The principle of the minority submitting to the majority, the principle of directing Party work from a center, not infrequently gives rise to attacks on the part of wavering elements, to accusations of "bureaucracy," "formalism," etc. It scarcely needs proof that systematic work by the Party as one whole, and the directing of the struggle of the working class, would be impossible without putting these principles into effect. Leninism in questions of organization is the unswerving application of these applications of these principles. Lenin terms the fight against these principles "Russian nihilism" and "aristocratic anarchism," which deserves to be ridiculed and swept aside.

Here is what Lenin says about these wavering elements in his book *One Step Forward* :

"This aristocratic anarchism is particularly characteristic of the Russian nihilist. He thinks of the Party organization as a monstrous 'factory'; he regards the subordination of the part to the whole and of the minority to the majority of 'serfdom'..., division of labor under the direction of a center evokes from him a tragi-comical outcry against people being transformed into 'wheels and cogs'..., mention of the organizational rules of the Party calls forth a contemptuous grimace and the disdainful...remark that one could very well dispense with rules altogether."

"It is clear, I think, that the cries about this celebrated bureaucracy are just a screen for dissatisfaction with the personal composition of the central bodies, a fig leaf....You are a bureaucrat because you were appointed by the congress not by my will, but against it; you are a formalist because you rely on the formal decisions of the congress, and not on my consent; you are acting in a grossly mechanical way because you plead the 'mechanical' majority at the Party Congress and pay no heed to my wish to be co-opted; you are an autocrat because you refuse to hand over the power to the old gang" [25] (see Vol. VI, pp. 310, 287).

3) *The Party as the highest form of class organization of the proletariat* . The Party is the organized detachment of the working class. But the Party is not the only organization of the working class. The proletariat has also a number of other organizations, without which it cannot wage a successful struggle against capital: trade unions, cooperatives, factory organizations, parliamentary groups, non-Party women's associations, the press, cultural and educational organizations, youth leagues, revolutionary fighting organizations (in times of open revolutionary action), Soviets of deputies as the form of state organization (if the proletariat is in power), etc. The overwhelming majority of these organizations are non-Party, and only some of them adhere directly to the Party, or constitute offshoots from it. All these organizations, under certain conditions, are absolutely necessary for

the working class, for without them it would be impossible to consolidate the class positions of the proletariat in the diverse spheres of struggle; for without them it would be impossible to solidify the proletariat as the force whose mission it is to replace the bourgeois order by the socialist order. But how can single leadership be exercised with such an abundance or organizations? What guarantee is there that this multiplicity of organizations will not lead to divergence in leadership? It may be said that each of these organizations carries on its work in its own special field, and that therefore these organizations cannot hinder one another. That, of course, is true. But it is also true that all these organizations should work in one direction for they serve *one* class, the class of the proletarians. The question then arises: who is to determine the line, the general direction, along which the work of all these organizations is to be conducted? Where is the central organizations which is not only able, because it has the necessary experience, to work out such a general line, but, in addition, is in a position, because it has sufficient prestige, to induce all these organizations to carry out this line , so as to attain unity of leadership and to make hitches impossible?

That organization is the Party of the proletariat.

The Party possesses all the necessary qualifications for this because, in the first place, it is the rallying center of the finest elements in the working class, who have direct connections with the non-Party organizations of the proletariat and very frequently lead them; because, secondly, the Party, as the rallying center of the finest members of the working class, is the best school for training leaders of the working class, capable of directing every form of organization of their class; because, thirdly, the Party, as the best school for training leaders of the working class, is, by reason of its experience and prestige , the only organization capable of centralizing the leadership of the struggle of the proletariat, thus transforming each and every non-Party organization of the working class into an auxiliary body and transmission belt linking the Party with the class.

The Party is the highest form of class organization of the proletariat.

This does not mean, of course, that non-Party organizations, trade unions, cooperatives, etc., should be officially subordinated to the Party leadership. It only means that the members of the Party who belong to these organizations and are doubtlessly influential in them should do all they can to persuade these non-Party organizations to draw nearer to the Party of the proletariat in their work and voluntarily accept its political leadership.

That is why Lenin says that the Party is "the *highest form* of proletarian class association," whose political leadership must extend to every other form of organization of the proletariat. (see Vol. XXV, p. 194)

That is why the opportunist theory of the "independence" and "neutrality" of the non-Party organizations, which breeds *independent* members of parliament and journalists *isolated* from the Party, *narrow-minded* trade union leaders and *philistine* cooperative officials, is wholly incompatible with the theory and practice of Leninism.

4) *The Party as an instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat.* The Party is the highest form of organization of the proletariat. The Party is the principle guiding force within the class of the proletarians and among the organizations of that class. But it does not by any means follow from this that the Party can be regarded as an end in itself, as a self-sufficient force. The Party is not only the highest form of class association of the proletarians; it is at the same time an *instrument* in the hands of the proletariat *for* achieving the dictatorship, when that has not yet been achieved and *for* consolidating and expanding the dictatorship when it has already been achieved. The Party could not have risen so high in importance and could not have exerted its influence over all other forms of organizations of the proletariat, if the latter had not been confronted with the question of power, if the conditions of imperialism, the inevitability of wars, and the existence of a crisis had not yet demanded the concentration of all the forces of the proletariat at one point, the gathering of all the threads of the revolutionary movement in one spot in order to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat. The proletariat needs the Party first of all as its General Staff, which it must have for the

successful seizure of power. It scarcely needs proof that without a party capable of rallying around itself the mass organizations of the proletariat, and of centralizing the leadership of the entire movement during the progress of the struggle , the proletariat in Russia could not have established its revolutionary dictatorship.

But the proletariat needs the Party not only to achieve the dictatorship; it needs it still more to maintain the dictatorship, to consolidate and expand it in order to achieve the complete victory of socialism.

"Certainly, almost everyone now realizes," says Lenin, "that the Bolsheviks could not have maintained themselves in power for two-and-a-half months, let alone two-and-a-half years, without the strictest, truly iron discipline in our Party, and without the fullest and unreserved support of the latter by the whole mass of the working class, that is, by all its thinking, honest, self-sacrificing and influential elements, capable of leading or of carrying with them the backwards strata" (see Vol. XXV, p. 173).

Now, what does it mean to "maintain" and "expand" the dictatorship? It means imbuing the millions of proletarians with the spirit of discipline and organization; it means creating among the proletarian masses a cementing force and a bulwark against the corrosive influence of the petty-bourgeois elemental forces and petty-bourgeois habits; it means enhancing the organizing work of the proletarians in re-educating and remolding the petty-bourgeois strata; it means helping the masses of the proletarians to educate themselves as a force capable of abolishing classes and of preparing the conditions for the organization of socialist production. But it is impossible to accomplish all this without a party which is strong because of its solidarity and discipline.

"The dictatorship of the proletariat," says Lenin, "is a stubborn struggle—bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society. The force of habit of millions and tens of millions is a most terrible force. Without an iron party tempered in the struggle, without a party enjoying the confidence of all that is honest in the given class without a

party capable of watching and influencing the mood of the masses, it is impossible to conduct such a strategy successfully" (see Vol. XXV, p. 190).

The proletariat needs the Party *for* the purpose of achieving and maintaining the dictatorship. The Party is an instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But from this it follows that when classes disappear and the dictatorship of the proletariat withers away, the Party also will wither away.

5) *The Party as the embodiment of unity of will, unity incompatible with the existence of factions.* The achievement and maintenance of the dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible without a party which is strong because of its solidarity and iron discipline. But iron discipline in the Party is inconceivable without unity of will, without complete and absolute unity of action on the part of all members of the Party. This does not mean, of course, that the possibility of conflicts of opinion within the Party is thereby precluded. On the contrary, iron discipline does not preclude but presupposes criticism and conflict of opinion within the Party. Least of all does it mean that discipline must be "blind." On the contrary, iron discipline does not preclude but presupposes conscious and voluntary submission, for only conscious discipline can be truly iron discipline. But after a conflict of opinion has been closed, after criticism has been exhausted and a decision has been arrived at, unity of will and unity of action of all Party members are the necessary conditions without which neither Party unity nor iron discipline in the Party is conceivable.

"In the present epoch of acute civil war," says Lenin, "the Communist Party will be able to perform its duty only if it is organized in the most centralized manner, if iron discipline bordering on military discipline prevails in it, and if its Party center is a powerful and authoritative organ, wielding wide powers and enjoying the universal confidence of the members of the Party" (see Vol. XXV, pp. 282-83).

This is the position in regard to discipline in the Party in the period of struggle preceding the achievement of the dictatorship.

The same, but to an even greater degree, must be said about discipline in the Party after the dictatorship has been achieved.

"Whoever," says Lenin, "weakens in the least the iron discipline of the Party of the proletariat (especially during the time of its dictatorship), actually aids the bourgeoisie against the proletariat" (see Vol. XXV, p. 190).

But from this it follows that the existence of factions is compatible neither with the Party's unity nor with its iron discipline. It scarcely needs proof that the existence of factions leads to the existence of a number of centers, and the existence of a number of centers means the absence of one common center in the Party, the breaking up of unity of will, the weakening and disintegration of discipline, the weakening and disintegration of the dictatorship. Of course, the parties of the Second International, which are fighting against the dictatorship of the proletariat and have no desire to lead the proletarians to power, can afford such liberalism as freedom of factions, for they have no need at all for iron discipline. But the parties of the Communist International, whose activities are conditioned by the task of achieving and consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, cannot afford to be "liberal" or to permit freedom of factions.

The Party represents unity of will, which precludes all factionalism and division of authority in the Party.

Hence Lenin's warning about the "danger of factionalism from the point of view of Party unity and of effecting the unity of will of the vanguard of the proletariat as the fundamental condition for the success of the dictatorship of the proletariat," which is embodied in the special resolution of the Tenth Congress of our Party "On Party Unity." [26]

Hence Lenin's demand for the "complete elimination of all factionalism" and the "immediate dissolution of all groups, without exemption, that have been formed on the basis of various platforms," on pain of "unconditional and immediate expulsion from the Party" (see the resolution "On Party Unity").

6) *The Party becomes strong by purging itself of opportunist elements* . The source of factionalism in the Party is its opportunist elements. The proletariat is not an isolated class. It is constantly replenished by the influx of peasants, petty bourgeois and intellectuals proletarianized by the development of capitalism. At the same time the upper stratum of the proletariat, principally trade union leaders and members of parliament who are fed by the bourgeoisie out of the super-profits extracted from the colonies, is undergoing a process of decay. "This stratum of bourgeoisified workers, or the 'labor aristocracy,'" says Lenin, "who are quite philistine in their mode of life, in the size of their earnings and in their entire outlook, is the principal prop of the Second International, and, in our days, the principal *social* (not military) *prop of the bourgeoisie* . For they are real *agents of the bourgeoisie in the working-class* movement, the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class..., real channels of reformism and chauvinism" (see Vol. XIX, p. 77)

In one way or another, all these petty-bourgeois groups penetrate into the Party and introduce into it the spirit of hesitancy and opportunism, the spirit of demoralization and uncertainty. It is they, principally, that constitute the source of factionalism and disintegration, the source of disorganization and disruption of the Party from within. To fight imperialism with such "allies" in one's rear means to put oneself in the position of being caught between two fires, from the front and from the rear. Therefore, ruthless struggle against such elements, their expulsion from the Party, is a prerequisite for the successful struggle against imperialism.

The theory of "defeating" opportunist elements by the ideological struggle within the Party, the theory of "overcoming" these elements within the confines of a single party, is a rotten and dangerous theory, which threatens

to condemn the Party to paralysis and chronic infirmity, threatens to leave the Party a prey to opportunism, threatens to leave the proletariat without a revolutionary party, threatens to deprive the proletariat of its main weapon in the fight against imperialism. Our Party could not have emerged on to the broad highway, it could not have seized power and organized the dictatorship of the proletariat, it could not have emerged victorious from the civil war, if it had had within its ranks people like Martov and Dan, Potresov and Axelrod. Our Party succeeded in achieving internal unity and unexampled cohesion of its ranks primarily because it was able to, in good time, purge itself of the opportunist pollution, because it was able to rid its ranks of the Liquidators and Mensheviks. Proletarian parties develop and become strong by purging themselves of opportunists and reformists, social-imperialists and social-chauvinists, social-patriots and social-pacifists.

The Party becomes strong by purging itself of opportunist elements.

"With reformists, Mensheviks, in our ranks," says Lenin, "it is *impossible* to be victorious in the proletarian revolution, it is *impossible* to defend it. That is obvious in principle, and it has been strikingly confirmed by the experience of both Russia and Hungary.... In Russia, difficult situations have arisen *many times* , when the Soviet regime would *most certainly* have been overthrown had Mensheviks, reformists and petty-bourgeois democrats remained in our Party...in Italy, where, as is generally admitted, decisive battles between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie for the possession of state power are imminent. At such a moment it is not only absolutely necessary to remove the Mensheviks, reformists, the Turatists from the Party, but it may even be useful to remove excellent Communists who are liable to waver, and who reveal a tendency to waver towards 'unity' with the reformists, to remove them from all responsible posts....On the eve of a revolution, and at a moment when a most fierce struggle is being waged for its victory, the slightest wavering in the ranks of the Party may *wreck everything* , frustrate the revolution, wrest the power from the hands of the proletariat; for this power is not yet consolidated, the attack upon it is still very strong. The desertion of wavering leaders at such a time does not

weaken but strengthens the Party, the working-class movement and the revolution" (see Vol. XXV, pp. 462, 463, 464).

Chapter 9: Style in Work

I am not referring to literary style. What I have in mind is style in work, that specific and peculiar feature in the practice of Leninism which creates the special type of Leninist worker. Leninism is a school of theory and practice which trains a special type of Party and state worker, it creates a special Leninist style in work.

What are the characteristic features of this style? What are its peculiarities?

It has two specific features:

a) Russian revolutionary sweep and
b) American efficiency.

The style of Leninism consists in combining these two specific features in Party and state work.

Russian revolutionary sweep is an antidote to inertia, routine, conservationism, mental stagnation and slavish submission to ancient traditions. Russian revolutionary sweep is the life-giving force which stimulates thought, impels things forward, breaks the past and opens up perspectives. Without it no progress is possible.

But Russian revolutionary sweep has every chance of degenerating in practice into empty "revolutionary" Manilovism if it is not combined with American efficiency in work. Examples of this degeneration are only too numerous. Who does not know the disease of "revolutionary" scheme concocting and "revolutionary" plan drafting, which springs from the belief in the power of decrees to arrange everything and re-make everything? A Russian writer, I. Ehrenburg, in his story *The Percommon (The Perfect Communist Man)* , has portrayed the type of a "Bolshevik" afflicted with this disease, who set himself the task of finding a formula for the ideally

perfect man and...became "submerged" in this "work." The story contains a great exaggeration, but it certainly gives a correct likeness of the disease. But no one, I think, has so ruthlessly and bitterly ridiculed those afflicted with this disease as Lenin. Lenin stigmatized this morbid belief in concocting schemes and in turning out decrees as "communist vainglory."

"Communist vainglory," says Lenin, "means that a man, who is a member of the Communist Party, and has not yet been purged from it, imagines that he can solve all his problems by issuing communist decrees" (see Vol. XXVII, pp. 50-51).

Lenin usually contrasted hollow "revolutionary" phrase mongering with plain everyday work, thus emphasizing that "revolutionary" scheme concocting is repugnant to the spirit and the letter of true Leninism.

"Fewer pompous phrases, more plain, *everyday* work..." says Lenin.

"Less political fireworks and more attention to the simplest but vital...facts of communist construction..." (see Vol. XXIV, pp. 343 and 335).

American efficiency, on the other hand, is an antidote to "revolutionary" Manilovism and fantastic scheme concocting. American efficiency is that indomitable force which neither knows nor recognises obstacles; which with its business-like perseverance brushes aside all obstacles; which continues at a task once started until it is finished, even if it is a minor task; and without which serious constructive work is inconceivable.

But American efficiency has every chance of degenerating into narrow and unprincipled practicalism if it is not combined with Russian revolutionary sweep. Who has not heard of that disease of narrow empiricism and unprincipled practicalism which has not infrequently caused certain "Bolsheviks" to degenerate and to abandon the cause of the revolution? We find a reflection of this peculiar disease in a story by B. Pilnyak, entitled *The Barren Year* , which depicts types of Russian "Bolsheviks" of strong will and practical determination who "function" very "energetically," but

without vision, without knowing "what it is all about," and who, therefore, stray from the path of revolutionary work. No one has ridiculed this disease of practicalism so incisively as Lenin. He branded it as "narrow-minded empiricism" and "brainless practicalism." He usually contrasted it with vital revolutionary work and the necessity of having a revolutionary work and the necessity of having a revolutionary perspective in all our daily activities, thus emphasizing that this unprincipled practicalism is as repugnant to true Leninism as "revolutionary" scheme concocting.

The combination of Russian revolutionary sweep with American efficiency is the essence of Leninism in Party and state work.

This combination alone produces the finished type of Leninist worker, the style of Leninism in work.

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[1] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (*Selected Works* , Vol. I, Moscow 1951, p. 61).

[2] This refers to the statement by Karl Marx in his letter to Frederick Engels of April 16, 1856 (see Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* , Vol. II, Moscow 1951, p. 412).

[3] This refers to Frederick Engels's article "The Bakuninists at Work" (see F. Engels, "Die Bakunisten an der Arbeit" in *Der Volksstaat* , No. 105, 106, and 107, 1873).

[4] V.I. Lenin, " *Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder* (see *Works* , 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 31, p. 9).

[5] V.I. Lenin, What the " *Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats* (see *Works* , 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 1, pp. 278-79).

[6] The Basle Congress of the Second International was held on November 24-25, 1912. It was convened in connection with the Balkan War and the impending threat of a world war. Only one question was discussed: the international situation and joint action against war. The congress adopted a manifesto calling upon the workers to utilize their proletarian organization and might to wage a revolutionary struggle against the danger of war, to declare "war against war."

[7] Karl Marx, Preface to the Second German Edition of the first volume of *Capital* , (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Works, Vol. I, Moscow 1951, p. 414).

[8] My italics—J. V. Stalin.

[9] Frederick Engels, *Ludwig Feurbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* , (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* , Vol. II, Moscow 1951, p. 338).

[10] V.I. Lenin, *Works* , 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 14.

[11] Karl Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach* , (see Frederick Engels, *Ludwig Feurbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* , Appendix). (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* „ Vol. II, Moscow 1951).

[12] V.I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* , (see *Works* , 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 22, pp. 173-290).

[13] My italics—J. V. Stalin.

[14] J. V. Stalin refers to the following articles written by V.I. Lenin in 1905: "Social-Democracy and a Provisional Revolutionary Government," from which he cites a passage; "The Revolutionary Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Peasantry"; and "On a Provisional Revolutionary Government" (see V.I. Lenin, *Works* , 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 8, pp. 247-63, 264-74, 427-47).

[15] My italics—J. V. Stalin.

[16] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The First Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League* , (see Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* , Vol. I, Moscow 1951, p. 102).

[17] My italics—J. V. Stalin.

[18] My italics—J. V. Stalin.

[19] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (see Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* , Vol. I, p. 22, and Vol. II, p. 420, Moscow 1951).

[20] All italics mine— J. V. Stalin.

[21] My italics — J. V. Stalin.

[22] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* , Vol. I, p. 22, and Vol. II, p. 382).

[23] *Selskosoyouz* — the All-Russian Union of Rural Cooperatives—existed from August 1921 to June 1929.

[24] V.I. Lenin's work "The Importance of Gold Now and After the Complete Victory of Socialism" (*Works* , 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 33, pp. 85-92).

[25] The 'gang' here referred to is that of Axelrod, Martov, Potresov and others, who would not submit to the decisions of the Second Congress and who accused Lenin of being a "bureaucrat."- *J.St* .

[26] The resolution "On Party Unity" was written by V.I. Lenin and adopted by the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), held on March 8-16, 1921 (see V.I. Lenin, *Works* , 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 32, pp. 217-21, and also *Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U.(B.) Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums* , Part I, 1941, pp. 364-66).

Reform or Revolution

by Rosa Luxemburg, 1900

Introduction

At first view the title of this work may be found surprising. Can the Social-Democracy be against reforms? Can we contrapose the social revolution, the transformation of the existing order, our final goal, to social reforms? Certainly not. The daily struggle for reforms, for the amelioration of the condition of the workers within the framework of the existing social order, and for democratic institutions, offers to the Social-Democracy the only means of engaging in the proletarian class war and working in the direction of the final goal—the conquest of political power and the suppression of wage labor. Between social reforms and revolution there exists for Social Democracy an indissoluble tie. The struggle for reforms is its means; the social revolution, its aim.

It is in Eduard Bernstein's theory, presented in his articles on *Problems of Socialism* , *Neue Zeit* of 1897–98, and in his book *Die Voraussetzungen des Socialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie* [1]. that we find, for the first time, the opposition of the two factors of the labor movement. His theory tends to counsel us to renounce the social transformation, the final goal of Social-Democracy and, inversely, to make of social reforms, the means of the class struggle, its aim. Bernstein himself has very clearly and characteristically formulated this viewpoint when he wrote: "The Final goal, no matter what it is, is nothing; the movement is everything."

But since the final goal of socialism constitutes the only decisive factor distinguishing the Social-Democratic movement from bourgeois democracy and from bourgeois radicalism, the only factor transforming the entire labor movement from a vain effort to repair the capitalist order into a class

struggle against this order, for the suppression of this order—the question: "Reform or Revolution?" as it is posed by Bernstein, equals for the Social-Democracy the question: "To be or not to be?" In the controversy with Bernstein and his followers, everybody in the Party ought to understand clearly it is not a question of this or that method of struggle, or the use of this or that set of tactics, but of the very existence of the Social-Democratic movement.

Upon a casual consideration of Bernstein's theory, this may appear like an exaggeration. Does he not continually mention the Social-Democracy and its aims? Does he not repeat again and again, in very explicit language, that he too strives toward the final goal of socialism, but in another way? Does he not stress particularly that he fully approves of the present practice of the Social-Democracy?

That is all true, to be sure. It is also true that every new movement, when it first elaborates its theory and policy, begins by finding support in the preceding movement, though it may be in direct contradiction with the latter. It begins by suiting itself to the forms found at hand and by speaking the language spoken hereto. In time the new grain breaks through the old husk. The new movement finds its forms and its own language.

To expect an opposition against scientific socialism at its very beginning, to express itself clearly, fully and to the last consequence on the subject of its real content: to expect it to deny openly and bluntly the theoretic basis of the Social-Democracy—would amount to underrating the power of scientific socialism. Today he who wants to pass as a socialist, and at the same time declare war on Marxian doctrine, the most stupendous product of the human mind in the century, must begin with involuntary esteem for Marx. He must begin by acknowledging himself to be his disciple, by seeking in Marx's own teachings the points of support for an attack on the latter, while he represents this attack as a further development of Marxian doctrine. On this account, we must, unconcerned by its outer forms, pick out the sheathed kernel of Bernstein's theory. This is a matter of urgent necessity for the broad layers of the industrial proletariat in our Party.

No coarser insult, no baser aspersion, can be thrown against the workers than the remarks: “Theocratic controversies are only for academicians.” Some time ago Lassalle said: “Only when science and the workers, these opposite poles of society, become one, will they crush in their arms of steel all obstacles to culture.” The entire strength of the modern labor movement rests on theoretical knowledge.

But doubly important is this knowledge for the workers in the present case, because it is precisely they and their influence in the movement that are in the balance here. It is their skin that is being brought to market. The opportunist theory in the Party, the theory formulated by Bernstein, is nothing else than an unconscious attempt to assure predominance to the petty-bourgeois elements that have entered our Party, to change the policy and aims of our Party in their direction. The question of reform or revolution, of the final goal and the movement, is basically, in another form, but the question of the petty-bourgeois or proletarian character of the labor movement.

It is, therefore, in the interest of the proletarian mass of the Party to become acquainted, actively and in detail, with the present theoretical knowledge remains the privilege of a handful of “academicians” in the Party, the latter will face the danger of going astray. Only when the great mass of workers take the keen and dependable weapons of scientific socialism in their own hands, will all the petty-bourgeois inclinations, all the opportunistic currents, come to naught. The movement will then find itself on sure and firm ground. “Quantity will do it”

Rosa Luxemburg

Chapter 1: The Opportunist Method

If it is true that theories are only the images of the phenomena of the exterior world in the human consciousness, it must be added, concerning Eduard Bernstein's system, that theories are sometimes inverted images. Think of a theory of instituting socialism by means of social reforms in the face of the complete stagnation of the reform movement in Germany. Think of a theory of trade union control. Consider the theory of winning a majority in Parliament, after the revision of the constitution of Saxony and in view of the most recent attempts against universal suffrage. However, the pivotal point of Bernstein's system is not located in his conception of the practical tasks of the Social-Democracy. It is found in his stand on the course of the objective development of capitalist society, which, in turn, is closely bound to his conception of the practical tasks of the Social-Democracy.

According to Bernstein, a general decline of capitalism seems to be increasingly improbable because, on the one hand, capitalism shows a greater capacity of adaptation, and, on the other hand, capitalist production becomes more and more varied.

The capacity of capitalism to adapt itself, says Bernstein, is manifested first in the disappearance of general crises, resulting from the development of the credit system, employers' organizations, wider means of communication and informational services. It shows itself secondly, in the tenacity of the middle classes, which hails from the growing differentiation of the branches of production and the elevation of vast layers of the proletariat to the level of the middle class. It is furthermore proved, argues Bernstein, by the amelioration of the economic and political situation of the proletariat as a result of its trade union activity.

From this theoretic stand is derived the following general conclusion about the practical work of the Social-Democracy. The latter must not direct its daily activity toward the conquest of political power, but toward the

betterment of the condition of the working class, within the existing order. It must not expect to institute socialism as a result of a political and social crisis, but should build socialism by means of the progressive extension of social control and the gradual application of the principle of cooperation.

Bernstein himself sees nothing new in his theories. On the contrary, he believes them to be in agreement with certain declarations of Marx and Engels. Nevertheless, it seems to us that it is difficult to deny that they are in formal contradiction with the conceptions of scientific socialism.

If Bernstein's revisionism merely consisted in affirming that the march of capitalist development is slower than was thought before, he would merely be presenting an argument for adjourning the conquest of power by the proletariat, on which everybody agreed up to now. Its only consequence would be a slowing up of the pace of the struggle.

But that is not the case. What Bernstein questions is not the rapidity of the development of capitalist society, but the march of the development itself and, consequently, the very possibility of a change to socialism.

Socialist theory up to now declared that the point of departure for a transformation to socialism would be a general and catastrophic crisis. We must distinguish in this outlook two things: the fundamental idea and its exterior form.

The fundamental idea consists of the affirmation that capitalism, as a result of its own inner contradictions, moves toward a point when it will be unbalanced, when it will simply become impossible. There were good reasons for conceiving that juncture in the form of a catastrophic general commercial crisis. But that is of secondary importance when the fundamental idea is considered.

The scientific basis of socialism rests, as is well known, on three principal results of capitalist development. First, on the growing anarchy of capitalist economy, leading inevitably to its ruin. Second, on the progressive

socialization of the process of production, which creates the germs of the future social order. And third, on the increased organization and consciousness of the proletarian class, which constitutes the active factor in the coming revolution.

Bernstein pulls away from the first of the three fundamental supports of scientific socialism. He says that capitalist development does not lead to a general economic collapse.

He does not merely reject a certain form of the collapse. He rejects the very possibility of collapse. He says textually: “One could claim that by collapse of the present society is meant something else than a general commercial crisis, worse than all others, that is a complete collapse of the capitalist system brought about as a result of its own contradictions.” And to this he replies: “With the growing development of society a complete and almost general collapse of the present system of production becomes more and more improbable, because capitalist development increases on the one hand the capacity of adaptation and, on the other—that is at the same time, the differentiation of industry.” (*Neue Zeit* , 1897-98, vol.18, p. 555)

But then the question arises: Why and how, in that case, can we attain the final goal? According to scientific socialism, the historic necessity of the socialist revolution manifests itself above all in the growing anarchy of capitalism, which drives the system into an impasse. But if one admits with Bernstein that capitalist development does not move in the direction of its own ruin, then socialism ceases to be objectively necessary. There remain the other two mainstays of the scientific explanation of socialism, which are also said to be consequences of capitalism itself: the socialization of the process of production and the growing consciousness of the proletariat. It is these two matters that Bernstein has in mind when he says: “The suppression of the theory of collapse does not in any way deprive socialist doctrine of the power of persuasion. For, examined closely, what are all factors enumerated by us that make for the suppression or the modification of the former crises? Nothing else, in fact, than the conditions, or even in part the germs, of the socialization of production and exchange.” (*Ibid.* , p. 554)

Very little reflection is needed to understand that here too we face a false conclusion. Where lies the importance of all the phenomena that are said by Bernstein to be the means of capitalist adaptation—cartels, the credit system, the development of means of communication, the amelioration of the situation of the working class, etc.? Obviously, in that they suppress or, at least, attenuate the internal contradictions of capitalist economy, and stop the development or the aggravation of these contradictions. Thus, the suppression of crises can only mean the suppression of the antagonism between production and exchange on the capitalist base. The amelioration of the situation of the working class, or the penetration of certain fractions of the class into middle layers, can only mean the attenuation of the antagonism between Capital and Labor. But if the mention factors suppress the capitalist contradictions and consequently save the system from ruin, if they enable capitalism to maintain itself—and that is why Bernstein calls them "means of adaptation"—how can cartels, the credit system, trade unions, etc., be at the same time "the conditions and even, in part, the germs" of socialism? Obviously only in the sense that they express most clearly the social character of production.

But by presenting it in its capitalist form, the same factors render superfluous, inversely, in the same measure, the transformation of this socialized production into socialist production. That is why they can be the germs or conditions of a socialist order only in a theoretical sense and not in an historic sense. They are phenomena which, in the light of our conception of socialism, we know to be related to socialism but which, in fact, not only do not lead to a socialist revolution but render it, on the contrary, superfluous.

There remains one force making for socialism—the class consciousness of the proletariat. But it, too, is in the given case not the simple intellectual reflection of the growing contradictions of capitalism and its approaching decline. It is now no more than an ideal whose force of persuasion rests only on the perfection attributed to it.

We have here, in brief, the explanation of the socialist program by means of "pure reason." We have here, to use simpler language, an idealist explanation of socialism. The objective necessity of socialism, the explanation of socialism as the result of the material development of society, falls to the ground.

Revisionist theory thus places itself in a dilemma. Either the socialist transformation is, as was admitted up to now, the consequence of the internal contradictions of capitalism, and with the growth of capitalism will develop its inner contradictions, resulting inevitably, at some point, in its collapse, (in that case the "means of adaptation" are ineffective and the theory of collapse is correct); or the "means of adaptation" will really stop the collapse of the capitalist system and thereby enable capitalism to maintain itself by suppressing its own contradictions. In that case socialism ceases to be an historic necessity. It then becomes anything you want to call it, but it is no longer the result of the material development of society.

The dilemma leads to another. Either revisionism is correct in its position on the course of capitalist development, and therefore the socialist transformation of society is only a utopia, or socialism is not a utopia, and the theory of "means of adaptation" is false. There is the question in a nutshell.

Chapter 2: The Adaption of Capital

According to Bernstein, the credit system, the perfected means of communication and the new capitalist combines are the important factors that forward the adaptation of capitalist economy.

Credit has diverse applications in capitalism. Its two most important functions are to extend production and to facilitate exchange. When the inner tendency of capitalist production to extend boundlessly strikes against the restricted dimensions of private property, credit appears as a means of surmounting these limits in a particular capitalist manner. Credit, through shareholding, combines in one magnitude of capital a large number of individual capitals. It makes available to each capitalist the use of other capitalists' money—in the form of industrial credit. As commercial credit it accelerates the exchange of commodities and therefore the return of capital into production, and thus aids the entire cycle of the process of production. The manner in which these two principal functions of credit influence the formation of crises is quite obvious. If it is true that crises appear as a result of the contradiction existing between the capacity of extension, the tendency of production to increase, and the restricted consumption capacity of the market, credit is precisely, in view of what was stated above, the specific means that makes this contradiction break out as often as possible. To begin with, it increases disproportionately the capacity of the extension of production and thus constitutes an inner motive force that is constantly pushing production to exceed the limits of the market. But credit strikes from two sides. After having (as a factor of the process of production) provoked overproduction, credit (as a factor of exchange) destroys, during the crisis, the very productive forces it itself created. At the first symptom of the crisis, credit melts away. It abandons exchange where it would still be found indispensable, and appearing instead, ineffective and useless, there, where some exchange still continues, it reduces to a minimum the consumption capacity of the market.

Besides having these two principal results, credit also influences the formation of crises in the following ways. It constitutes the technical means

of making available to an entrepreneur the capital of other owners. It stimulates at the same time the bold and unscrupulous utilization of the property of others. That is, it leads to speculation. Credit not only aggravates the crisis in its capacity as a dissembled means of exchange, it also helps to bring and extend the crisis by transforming all exchange into an extremely complex and artificial mechanism that, having a minimum of metallic money as a real base, is easily disarranged at the slightest occasion.

We see that credit, instead of being an instrument for the suppression or the attenuation of crises, is on the contrary a particularly mighty instrument for the formation of crises. It cannot be anything else. Credit eliminates the remaining rigidity of capitalist relationships. It introduces everywhere the greatest elasticity possible. It renders all capitalist forces extensible, relative and mutually sensitive to the highest degree. Doing this, it facilitates and aggravates crises, which are nothing more or less than the periodic collisions of the contradictory forces of capitalist economy.

That leads us to another question. Why does credit generally have the appearance of a “means of adaptation” of capitalism? No matter what the relation or form in which this “adaptation” is represented by certain people, it can obviously consist only of the power to suppress one of the several antagonistic relations of capitalist economy, that is, of the power to suppress or weaken one of these contradictions, and allow liberty of movement, at one point or another, to the other fettered productive forces. In fact, it is precisely credit that aggravates these contradictions to the highest degree. It aggravates the antagonism between the mode of production and the mode of exchange by stretching production to the limit and at the same time paralyzing exchange at the smallest pretext. It aggravates the antagonism between the mode of production and the mode of appropriation by separating production from ownership, that is, by transforming the capital employed in production into “social” capital and at the same time transforming a part of the profit, in the form of interest on capital, into a simple title of ownership. It aggravates the antagonism existing between the property relations (ownership) and the relations of production by putting into a small number of hands immense productive forces and expropriating large numbers of small capitalists. Lastly, it aggravates the antagonism

existing between social character of production and private capitalist ownership by rendering necessary the intervention of the State in production.

In short, credit reproduces all the fundamental antagonisms of the capitalist world. It accentuates them. It precipitates their development and thus pushes the capitalist world forward to its own destruction. The prime act of capitalist adaptation, as far as credit is concerned, should really consist in breaking and suppressing credit. In fact, credit is far from being a means of capitalist adaptation. It is, on the contrary, a means of destruction of the most extreme revolutionary significance. Has not this revolutionary character of credit actually inspired plans of "socialist" reform? As such, it has had some distinguished proponents, some of whom (Isaac Pereira in France), were, as Marx put it, half prophets, half rogues.

Just as fragile is the second "means of adaptation": employers' organizations. According to Bernstein, such organizations will put an end to anarchy of production and do away with crises through their regulation of production. The multiple repercussions of the development of cartels and trusts have not been considered too carefully up to now. But they predict a problem that can only be solved with the aid of Marxist theory.

One thing is certain. We could speak of a damming up of capitalist anarchy through the agency of capitalist combines only in the measure that cartels, trusts, etc., become, even approximately, the dominant form of production. But such a possibility is excluded by the very nature of cartels. The final economic aim and result of combines is the following. Through the suppression of competition in a given branch of production, the distribution of the mass of profit realized on the market is influenced in such a manner that there is an increase of the share going to this branch of industry. Such organization of the field can increase the rate of profit in one branch of industry at the expense of another. That is precisely why it cannot be generalized, for when it is extended to all important branches of industry, this tendency suppresses its own influence.

Furthermore, within the limits of their practical application the result of combines is the very opposite of suppression of industrial anarchy. Cartels ordinarily succeed in obtaining an increase of profit, in the home market, by producing at a lower rate of profit for the foreign market, thus utilizing the supplementary portions of capital which they cannot utilize for domestic needs. That is to say, they sell abroad cheaper than at home. The result is the sharpening of competition abroad—the very opposite of what certain people want to find. That is well demonstrated by the history of the world sugar industry.

Generally speaking, combines treated as a manifestation of the capitalist mode of production, can only be considered a definite phase of capitalist development. Cartels are fundamentally nothing else than a means resorted to by the capitalist mode of production for the purpose of holding back the fatal fall of the rate of profit in certain branches of production. What method do cartels employ for this end? That of keeping inactive a part of the accumulated capital. That is, they use the same method which in another form is employed in crises. The remedy and the illness resemble each other like two drops of water. Indeed, the first can be considered the lesser evil only up to a certain point. When the outlets of disposal begin to shrink, and the world market has been extended to its limit and has become exhausted through the competition of the capitalist countries—and sooner or later that is bound to come—then the forced partial idleness of capital will reach such dimensions that the remedy will become transformed into a malady, and capital, already pretty much “socialized” through regulation, will tend to revert again to the form of individual capital. In the face of the increased difficulties of finding markets, each individual portion of capital will prefer to take its chances alone. At that time, the large regulating organizations will burst like soap bubbles and give way to aggravated competition.

In a general way, cartels, just like credit, appear therefore as a determined phase of capitalist development, which in the last analysis aggravates the anarchy of the capitalist world and expresses and ripens its internal contradictions. Cartels aggravate the antagonism existing between the mode of production and exchange by sharpening the struggle between the producer and consumer, as is the case especially in the United States. They

aggravate, furthermore, the antagonism existing between the mode of production and the mode of appropriation by opposing, in the most brutal fashion, to the working class the superior force of organized capital, and thus increasing the antagonism between Capital and Labor.

Finally, capitalist combinations aggravate the contradiction existing between the international character of capitalist world economy and the national character of the State—insofar as they are always accompanied by a general tariff war, which sharpens the differences among the capitalist States. We must add to this the decidedly revolutionary influence exercised by cartels on the concentration of production, technical progress, etc.

In other words, when evaluated from the angle of their final effect on capitalist economy, cartels and trusts fail as "means of adaptation." They fail to attenuate the contradictions of capitalism. On the contrary, they appear to be an instrument of greater anarchy. They encourage the further development of the internal contradictions of capitalism. They accelerate the coming of a general decline of capitalism.

But if the credit system, cartels, and the rest do not suppress the anarchy of capitalism, why have we not had a major commercial crisis for two decades, since 1873? Is this not a sign that, contrary to Marx's analysis the capitalist mode of production has adapted itself—at least, in a general way—to the needs of society? Hardly had Bernstein rejected, in 1898, Marx's theory of crises, when a profound general crisis broke out in 1900, while seven years later, a new crisis beginning in the United States, hit the world market. Facts proved the theory of "adaptation" to be false. They showed at the same time that the people who abandoned Marx's theory of crisis only because no crisis occurred within a certain space of time merely confused the essence of this theory with one of its secondary exterior aspects—the ten-year cycle. The description of the cycle of modern capitalist industry as a ten-year period was to Marx and Engels, in 1860 and 1870, only a simple statement of facts. It was not based on a natural law but on a series of given historical circumstances that were connected with the rapidly spreading activity of young capitalism.

The crisis of 1825 was in effect, the result of extensive investment of capital in the construction of roads, canals, and gas works, which took place during the preceding decade, particularly in England, where the crisis broke out. The following crisis of 1836-1839 was similarly the result of heavy investments in the construction of means of transportation. The crisis of 1847 was provoked by the feverish building of railroads in England (from 1844 to 1847, in three years, the British Parliament gave railway concessions to the value of 15 billion dollars). In each of the three mentioned cases, a crisis came after new bases for capitalist development were established. In 1857, the same result was brought by the abrupt opening of new markets for European industry in America and Australia, after the discovery of the gold mines, and the extensive construction of railway lines, especially in France, where the example of England was then closely imitated. (From 1852 to 1856, new railway lines to the value of 1,250 million francs were built in France alone). And finally, we have the great crisis of 1873—a direct consequence of the firm boom of large industry in Germany and Austria, which followed the political events of 1866 and 1871.

So that up to now, the sudden extension of the domain of capitalist economy, and not its shrinking, was each time the cause of the commercial crisis. That the international crises repeated themselves precisely every ten years was a purely exterior fact, a matter of chance. The Marxist formula for crises as presented by Engels in *Anti-Dühring* and by Marx in the first and third volumes of *Capital* , applies to all crises only in the measure that it uncovers their international mechanism and their general basic causes.

Crises may repeat themselves every five or ten years, or even every eight or twenty years. But what proves best the falseness of Bernstein's theory is that it is in the countries having the greatest development of the famous "means of adaptation"—credit, perfected communications and trusts—that the last crisis (1907-1908) was most violent.

The belief that capitalist production could "adapt" itself to exchange presupposes one of two things: either the world market can spread

unlimitedly, or on the contrary the development of the productive forces is so fettered that it cannot pass beyond the bounds of the market. The first hypothesis constitutes a material impossibility. The second is rendered just as impossible by the constant technical progress that daily creates new productive forces in all branches.

There remains still another phenomenon which, says Bernstein, contradicts the course of capitalist development as it is indicated above. In the "steadfast phalanx" of middle-size enterprises, Bernstein sees a sign that the development of large industry does not move in a revolutionary direction, and is not as effective from the angle of the concentration of industry as was expected by the "theory" of collapse. He is here, however, the victim of his own lack of understanding. To see the progressive disappearance of large industry is to misunderstand sadly the nature of this process.

According to Marxist theory, small capitalists play in the general course of capitalist development the role of pioneers of technical change. They possess that role in a double sense. They initiate new methods of production in well-established branches of industry; they are instrumental in the creation of new branches of production not yet exploited by the big capitalist. It is false to imagine that the history of the middle-size capitalist establishments proceeds straight in the direction of their progressive disappearance. The course of this development is on the contrary purely dialectical and moves constantly among contradictions. The middle capitalist layers find themselves, just like the workers, under the influence of two antagonistic tendencies, one ascendant, the other descendant. In this case, the descendent tendency is the continued rise of the scale of production, which periodically overflows the dimensions of the average size parcels of capital and removes them repeatedly from the terrain of world competition.

The ascendant tendency is, first, the periodic depreciation of the existing capital, which lowers again, for a certain time, the scale of production in proportion to the value of the necessary minimum amount of capital. It is represented, besides, by the penetration of capitalist production into new spheres. The struggle of the average size enterprise against big Capital

cannot be considered a regularly proceeding battle in which the troops of the weaker party continue to melt away directly and quantitatively. It should be rather regarded as a periodic mowing down of the small enterprises, which rapidly grow up again, only to be mowed down once more by large industry. The two tendencies play ball with the middle capitalist layers. The descending tendency must win in the end.

The very opposite is true about the development of the working class. The victory of the descending tendency must not necessarily show itself in an absolute numerical diminution of the middle-size enterprises. It must show itself, first in the progressive increase of the minimum amount of capital necessary for the functioning of the enterprises in the old branches of production; second in the constant diminution of the interval of time during which the small capitalists conserve the opportunity to exploit the new branches of production. The result, as far as the small capitalist is concerned, is a progressively shorter duration of his stay in the new industry and a progressively more rapid change in the methods of production as a field for investment. For the average capitalist strata, taken as a whole, there is a process of more and more rapid social assimilation and dissimilation.

Bernstein knows this perfectly well. He himself comments on this. But what he seems to forget is that this very thing is the law of the movement of the average capitalist enterprise. If one admits that small capitalists are pioneers of technical progress, and if it true that the latter is the vital pulse of the capitalist economy, then it is manifest that small capitalists are an integral part of capitalist development, which can only disappear together with it [capitalist development]. The progressive disappearance of the middle-size enterprise—in the absolute sense considered by Bernstein—means not, as he thinks, the revolutionary course of capitalist development, but precisely the contrary, the cessation, the slowing up of development. “The rate of profit, that is to say, the relative increase of capital,” said Marx, “is important first of all for new investors of capital, grouping themselves independently. And as soon as the formation of capital falls exclusively into a handful of big capitalists, the revivifying fire of production is extinguished. It dies away.”

Chapter 3: The Realization of Socialism through Social Reforms

Bernstein rejects the "theory of collapse" as an historic road toward socialism. Now what is the way to a socialist society that is proposed by his "theory of adaptation to capitalism"? Bernstein answers this question only by allusion. Konrad Schmidt, however, attempts to deal with this detail in the manner of Bernstein. According to him, "the trade union struggle for hours and wages and the political struggle for reforms will lead to a progressively more extensive control over the conditions of production," and "as the rights of the capitalist proprietor will be diminished through legislation, he will be reduced in time to the role of a simple administrator." "The capitalist will see his property lose more and more value to himself" till finally "the direction and administration of exploitation will be taken from him entirely" and "collective exploitation" instituted.

Therefore, trade unions, social reforms and, adds Bernstein, the political democratization of the State are the means of the progressive realization of socialism.

But the fact is that the principal function of trade unions (and this was best explained by Bernstein himself in *Neue Zeit* in 1891) consists in providing the workers with a means of realizing the capitalist law of wages, that is to say, the sale of their labor power at current market prices. Trade unions enable the proletariat to utilize at each instant, the conjuncture of the market. But these conjunctures—(1) the labor demand determined by the state of production, (2) the labor supply created by the proletarianization of the middle strata of society and the natural reproduction of the working classes, and (3) the momentary degree of productivity of labor—these remain outside of the sphere of influence of the trade unions. Trade unions cannot suppress the law of wages. Under the most favorable circumstances, the best they can do is to impose on capitalist exploitation the "normal" limit of the moment. They have not, however, the power to suppress exploitation itself, not even gradually.

Schmidt, it is true, sees the present trade union movement in a "feeble initial stage." He hopes that "in the future" the "trade union movement will exercise a progressively increased influence over the regulation of production." But by the regulation of production we can only understand two things: intervention in the technical domain of the process of production and fixing the scale of production itself. What is the nature of the influence exercised by trade unions in these two departments? It is clear that in the technique of production, the interest of the capitalist agrees, up to a certain point, with the progress and development of capitalist economy. It is his own interest that pushes him to make technical improvements. But the isolated worker finds himself in a decidedly different position. Each technical transformation contradicts his interests. It aggravates his helpless situation by depreciating the value of his labor power and rendering his work more intense, more monotonous and more difficult.

Insofar as trade unions can intervene in the technical department of production, they can only oppose technical innovation. But here they do not act in the interest of the entire working class and its emancipation, which accords rather with technical progress and, therefore, with the interest of the isolated capitalist. They act here in a reactionary direction. And in fact, we find efforts on the part of workers to intervene in the technical part of production not in the future, where Schmidt looks for it, but in the past of the trade union movement. Such efforts characterized the old phase of English trade unionism (up to 1860), when the British organizations were still tied to medieval "corporative" vestiges and found inspiration in the outworn principle of "a fair day's wage for a fair day's labor," as expressed by Webb in his *History of Trade Unionism* .

On the other hand, the effort of the labor unions to fix the scale of production and the prices of commodities is a recent phenomenon. Only recently have we witnessed such attempts—and again in England. In their nature and tendencies, these efforts resemble those dealt with above. What does the active participation of trade unions in fixing the scale and cost of production amount to? It amounts to a cartel of the workers and entrepreneurs in a common stand against the consumer and especially rival

entrepreneurs. In no way is the effect of this any different from that of ordinary employers' associations. Basically, we no longer have here a struggle between Labor and Capital, but the solidarity of Capital and Labor against the total consumers. Considered for its social worth, it is seen to be a reactionary move that cannot be a stage in the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat, because it connotes the very opposite of the class struggle. Considered from the angle of practical application, it is found to be a utopia which, as shown by a rapid examination, cannot be extended to the large branches of industry producing for the world market.

So that the scope of trade unions is limited essentially to a struggle for an increase of wages and the reduction of labor time, that is to say, to efforts at regulating capitalist exploitation as they are made necessary by the momentary situation of the old-world market. But labor unions can in no way influence the process of production itself. Moreover, trade union development moves—contrary to what is asserted by Konrad Schmidt—in the direction of a complete detachment of the labor market from any immediate relation to the rest of the market.

That is shown by the fact that even attempts to relate labor contracts to the general situation of production by means of a system of sliding wage scales have been outmoded with historic development. The British labor unions are moving farther and farther away from such efforts.

Even within the effective boundaries of its activity the trade union movement cannot spread in the unlimited way claimed for it by the theory of adaptation. On the contrary, if we examine the large factors of social development, we see that we are not moving toward an epoch marked by a victorious development of trade unions, but rather toward a time when the hardships of labor unions will increase. Once industrial development has attained its highest possible point and capitalism has entered its descending phase on the world market, the trade union struggle will become doubly difficult. In the first place, the objective conjuncture of the market will be less favorable to the sellers of labor power, because the demand for labor power will increase at a slower rate and labor supply more rapidly than at present. In the second place, the capitalists themselves, in order to make up

for losses suffered on the world market, will make even greater efforts than at present to reduce the part of the total product going to the workers (in the form of wages). The reduction of wages is, as pointed out by Marx, one of the principal means of retarding the fall of profit. The situation in England already offers us a picture of the beginning of the second stage of trade union development. Trade union action is reduced of necessity to the simple defense of already realized gains, and even that is becoming more and more difficult. Such is the general trend of things in our society. The counterpart of this tendency should be the development of the political side of the class struggle.

Konrad Schmidt commits the same error of historic perspective when he deals with social reforms. He expects that social reforms, like trade union organizations, will "dictate to the capitalists the only conditions under which they will be able to employ labor power." Seeing reform in this light, Bernstein calls labor legislation a piece of "social control," and as such, a piece of socialism. Similarly, Konrad Schmidt always uses the term "social control" when he refers to labor protection laws. Once he has thus happily transformed the State into society, he confidently adds: "That is to say, the rising working class." As a result of this trick of substitution, the innocent labor laws enacted by the German Federal Council are transformed into transitory socialist measures supposedly enacted by the German proletariat.

The mystification is obvious. We know that the present State is not a "society" representing the "rising working class." It is itself the representative of capitalist society. It is a class state. Therefore, its reform measures are not an application of "social control," that is, the control of society working freely in its own labor process. They are forms of control applied by the class organization of Capital to the production of Capital. The so-called social reforms are enacted in the interests of Capital. Yes, Bernstein and Konrad Schmidt see at present only "feeble beginnings" of this control. They hope to see a long succession of reforms in the future, all favoring the working class. But here they commit a mistake similar to their belief in the unlimited development of the trade union movement.

A basic condition for the theory of the gradual realization of socialism through social reforms is a certain objective development of capitalist property and of the State. Konrad Schmidt says that the capitalist proprietor tends to lose his special rights with historic development, and is reduced to the role of a simple administrator. He thinks that the expropriation of the means of production cannot possibly be affected as a single historic act. He therefore resorts to the theory of expropriation by stages. With this in mind, he divides the right to property into (1) the right of "sovereignty" (ownership)—which he attributes to a thing called "society" and which he wants to extend—and (2) its opposite, the simple right of use, held by the capitalist, but which is supposedly being reduced in the hands of the capitalists to the mere administration of their enterprises.

This interpretation is either a simple play on words, and in that case the theory of gradual expropriation has no real basis, or it is a true picture of judicial development, in which case, as we shall see, the theory of gradual expropriation is entirely false.

The division of the right of property into several component rights, an arrangement serving Konrad Schmidt as a shelter wherein he may construct his theory of "expropriation by stages," characterized feudal society, founded on natural economy. In feudalism, the total product was shared among the social classes of the time on the basis of the personal relations existing between the feudal lord and his serfs or tenants. The decomposition of property into several partial rights reflected the manner of distribution of the social wealth of that period. With the passage to the production of commodities and the dissolution of all personal bonds among the participants in the process of production, the relation between men and things (that is to say, private property) became reciprocally stronger. Since the division is no longer made on the basis of personal relations but through exchange, the different rights to a share in the social wealth are no longer measured as fragments of property rights having a common interest. They are measured according to the values brought by each on the market.

The first change introduced into juridical relations with the advance of commodity production in the medieval city communes, was the development of absolute private property. The latter appeared in the very midst of the feudal juridical relations. This development has progressed at a rapid pace in capitalist production. The more the process of production is socialized, the more the process of distribution (division of wealth) rests on exchange. And the more private property becomes inviolable and closed, the more capitalist property becomes transformed from the right to the product of one's own labor to the simple right to appropriate somebody else's labor. As long as the capitalist himself manages his own factory, distribution is still, up to a certain point, tied to his personal participation in the process of production. But as the personal management on the part of the capitalist becomes superfluous—which is the case in the share-holding societies today—the property of capital, so far as its right to share in the distribution (division of wealth) is concerned, becomes separated from any personal relation with production. It now appears in its purest form. The capitalist right to property reaches its most complete development in capital held in the shape of shares and industrial credit.

So that Konrad Schmidt's historic schema, tracing the transformation of the capitalist "from a proprietor to a simple administrator," belies the real historic development. In historic reality, on the contrary, the capitalist tends to change from a proprietor and administrator to a simple proprietor. What happens here to Konrad Schmidt, happened to Goethe:

What is, he sees as in a dream.
What no longer is, becomes for him reality.

Just as Schmidt's historic schema travels, economically, backwards from a modern share-holding society to an artisan's shop, so, juridically, he wishes to lead back the capitalist world into the old feudal shell of the Middle Ages.

Also, from this point of view, "social control" appears in reality under a different aspect than seen by Konrad Schmidt. What functions today as "social control"—labor legislation, the control of industrial organizations

through shareholding, etc.—has absolutely nothing to do with his "supreme ownership." Far from being, as Schmidt believes, a reduction of capitalist ownership, his "social control," is, on the contrary, a protection of such ownership. Or, expressed from the economic viewpoint, it is not a threat to capitalist exploitation, but simply the regulation of exploitation. When Bernstein asks if there is more or less of socialism in a labor protective law, we can assure him that, in the best of labor protective laws, there is no more "socialism" than in a municipal ordinance regulating the cleaning of streets or the lighting of street lamps.

Chapter 4: Capitalism and the State

The second condition of the gradual realization of socialism is according to Bernstein, the evolution of the State in society. It has become a commonplace to say that the present State is a class State. This, too, like referring to capitalist society, should not be understood in a rigorous absolute manner, but dialectically.

The State became capitalist with the political victory of the bourgeoisie. Capitalist development modifies essentially the nature of the State, widening its sphere of action, constantly imposing on it new functions (especially those affecting economic life), making more and more necessary its intervention and control in society. In this sense, capitalist development prepares little by little the future fusion of the State to society. It prepares, so to say, the return of the function of the state to society. Following this line of thought, one can speak of an evolution of the capitalist State into society, and it is undoubtedly what Marx had in mind when he referred to labor legislation as the first conscious intervention of "society" in the vital social process, a phrase upon which Bernstein leans heavily.

But on the other hand, the same capitalist development realizes another transformation in the nature of the State. The present State is, first of all, an organization of the ruling class. It assumes functions favoring social developments specifically because, and in the measure that, these interests and social developments coincide, in a general fashion, with the interests of the dominant class. Labor legislation is enacted as much in the immediate interest of the capitalist class as in the interest of society in general. But this harmony endures only up to a certain point of capitalist development. When capitalist development has reached a certain level, the interests of the bourgeoisie, as a class, and the needs of economic progress begin to clash even in the capitalist sense. We believe that this phase has already begun. It shows itself in two extremely important phenomena of contemporary social life: on the one hand, the policy of tariff barriers, and on the other, militarism. These two phenomena have played an indispensable, and in that

sense a progressive and revolutionary role in the history of capitalism. Without tariff protection the development of large industry would have been impossible in several countries. But now the situation is different.

At present, protection does not serve so much to develop young industry as to maintain artificially certain aged forms of production.

From the angle of capitalist development, that is, from the point of view of world economy, it matters little whether Germany exports more merchandise into England or England exports more merchandise into Germany. From the viewpoint of this development, it may be said that the blackamoor has done his work and it is time for him to go his own way. Given the condition of reciprocal dependence in which the various branches of industry find themselves, a protectionist tariff on any commodity necessarily results in raising the cost of production of other commodities inside the country. It therefore impedes industrial development. But this is not so from the viewpoint of the interests of the capitalist class. While industry does not need tariff barriers for its development, the entrepreneurs need tariffs to protect their markets. This signifies that at present tariffs no longer serve as a means of protecting a developing capitalist section against a more advanced section. They are now the arm used by one national group of capitalists against another group. Furthermore, tariffs are no longer necessary as an instrument of protection for industry in its movement to create and conquer the home market. They are now indispensable means for the cartelization of industry, that is, means used in the struggle of capitalist producers against consuming society in the aggregate. What brings out in an emphatic manner the specific character of contemporary customs policies is the fact that today not industry, but agriculture plays the predominant role in the making of tariffs. The policy of customs protection has become a tool for converting and expressing the feudal interests in capitalist form.

The same change has taken place in militarism. If we consider history as it was—not as it could have been or should have been—we must agree that war has been an indispensable feature of capitalist development. The United States, Germany, Italy, the Balkan States, Poland, all owe the condition or the rise of their capitalist development to wars, whether resulting in victory

or defeat. As long as there were countries marked by internal political division or economic isolation which had to be destroyed, militarism played a revolutionary role, considered from the viewpoint of capitalism. But at present the situation is different. If world politics have become the stage of menacing conflicts, it is not so much a question of the opening of new countries to capitalism. It is a question of already existing *European* antagonisms, which, transported into other lands, have exploded there. The armed opponents we see today in Europe and on other continents do not range themselves as capitalist countries on one side and backward countries on the other. They are States pushed to war especially as a result of their similarly advanced capitalist development. In view of this, an explosion is certain to be fatal to this development, in the sense that it must provoke an extremely profound disturbance and transformation of economic life in all countries.

However, the matter appears entirely different when considered from the standpoint of the *capitalist class* . For the latter, militarism has become indispensable. First , as a means of struggle for the defense of "national" interests in competition against other "national" groups. Second , as a method of placement for financial and industrial capital. Third , as an instrument of class domination over the laboring population inside the country. In themselves, these interests have nothing in common with the development of the capitalist mode of production. What demonstrates best the specific character of present-day militarism is the fact that it develops generally in all countries as an effect, so to speak, of its own internal, mechanical, motive power, a phenomenon that was completely unknown several decades ago. We recognize this in the fatal character of the impending explosion which is inevitable in spite of the complete impending explosion which is inevitable in spite of the complete indecisiveness of the objectives and motives of the conflict. From a motor of capitalist development militarism has changed into a capitalist malady.

In the clash between capitalist development and the interest of the dominant class, the State takes a position alongside the latter. Its policy, like that of the bourgeoisie, comes into conflict with social development. It thus loses more and more of its character as a representative of the whole of society

and is transformed, at the same rate into a pure *class* state. Or, to speak more exactly, these two qualities distinguish themselves more from each other and find themselves in a contradictory relation in the very nature of the State. This contradiction becomes progressively sharper. For on one hand, we have the growth of the functions of a general interest on the part of the State, its intervention in social life, its "control" over society. But on the other hand, its class character obliges the State to move the pivot of its activity and its means of coercion more and more into domains which are useful only to the class character of the bourgeoisie and have for society as a whole only a negative importance, as in the case of militarism and tariff and colonial policies. Moreover, the "social control" exercised by this State is at the same time penetrated with and dominated by its class character (see how labor legislation is applied in all countries).

The extension of democracy, which Bernstein sees as a means of realizing socialism by degrees, does not contradict but, on the contrary, corresponds perfectly to the transformation realized in the nature of the State.

Konrad Schmidt declares that the conquest of a social-democratic majority in Parliament leads directly to the gradual "socialization" of society. Now, the democratic forms of political life are without a question a phenomenon expressing clearly the evolution of the State in society. They constitute, to that extent, a move toward a socialist transformation. But the conflict within the capitalist State, described above, manifests itself even more emphatically in modern parliamentarism. Indeed, in accordance with its form, parliamentarism serves to express, within the organization of the State, the interests of the whole society. But what parliamentarism expresses here is capitalist society, that is to say, a society in which capitalist interests predominate. In this society, the representative institutions, democratic in form, are in content with the instruments of the interests of the ruling class. This manifests itself in a tangible fashion in the fact that as soon as democracy shows the tendency to negate its class character and become transformed into an instrument of the real interests of the population, the democratic forms are sacrificed by the bourgeoisie, and by its State representatives. That is why the idea of the conquest of a parliamentary reformist majority is a calculation which, entirely in the spirit of bourgeois

liberalism, pre-occupies itself only with one side—the formal side—of democracy, but does not take into account the other side, its real content. All in all, parliamentarism is not a directly socialist element impregnating gradually the whole capitalist society. It is, on the contrary, a specific form of the bourgeois class State, helping to ripen and develop the existing antagonisms of capitalism.

In the light of the history of the objective development of the State, Bernstein's and Konrad Schmidt's belief that increased "social control" results in the direct introduction of socialism is transformed into a formula that finds itself from day to day in greater contradiction with reality.

The theory of the gradual introduction of socialism proposes progressive reform of capitalist property and the capitalist State in the direction of socialism. But in consequence of the objective laws of existing society, one and the other develop in a precisely opposite direction. The process of production is increasingly socialized, and State intervention, the control of the State over the process of production, is extended. But at the same time, private property becomes more and more the form of open capitalist exploitation of the labor of others, and State control is penetrated with the exclusive interests of the ruling class. The State, that is to say the *political* organization of capitalism, and the property relations, that is to say the *juridical* organization of capitalism, become more *capitalist* and not more socialist, opposing to the theory of the progressive introduction of socialism two insurmountable difficulties.

Fourier's scheme of changing, by means of a system of phalansteries, the water of all the seas into tasty lemonade was surely a fantastic idea. But Bernstein, proposing to change the sea of capitalist bitterness into a sea of socialist sweetness, by progressively pouring bottles of social reformist lemonade into it, presents an idea that is merely more insipid but no less fantastic.

The production relations of capitalist society approach more and more the production relations of socialist society. But on the other hand, its political and juridical relations established between capitalist society and socialist

society a steadily rising wall. This wall is not overthrown, but is on the contrary strengthened and consolidated by the development of social reforms and the course of democracy. Only the hammer blow of revolution, that is to say, *the conquest of political power by the proletariat can break down this wall.*

Chapter 5: The Consequences of Social Reformism and General Nature of Reformism

In the first chapter we aimed to show that Bernstein's theory lifted the program of the socialist movement off its material base and tried to place it on an idealist base. How does this theory fare when translated into practice?

Upon the first comparison, the party practice resulting from Bernstein's theory does not seem to differ from the practice followed by the Social Democracy up to now. Formerly, the activity of the Social-Democratic Party consisted of trade union work, agitation for social reforms and the democratization of existing political institutions. The difference is not in the *what,* but in the *how.*

At present, the trade union struggle and parliamentary practice are considered to be the means of guiding and educating the proletariat in preparation for the task of taking over power. From the revisionist standpoint, this conquest of power is at the same time impossible or useless. And therefore, trade union and parliamentary activity are to be carried on by the party only for their immediate results, that is, for the purpose of bettering the present situation of the workers, for the gradual reduction of capitalist exploitation, for the extension of social control.

So that if we do not consider momentarily the immediate amelioration of the workers' condition—an objective common to our party program as well as to revisionism—the difference between the two outlooks is, in brief, the following. According to the present conception of the party, trade-union and parliamentary activity are important for the socialist movement because such activity prepares the proletariat, that is to say, creates the *subjective* factor of the socialist transformation, for the task of realizing socialism. But according to Bernstein, trade-unions and parliamentary activity gradually reduce capitalist exploitation itself. They remove from capitalist society its capitalist character. They realize *objectively* the desired social change.

Examining the matter closely, we see that the two conceptions are diametrically opposed. Viewing the situation from the current standpoint of our party, we say that as a result of its trade union and parliamentary struggles, the proletariat becomes convinced, of the impossibility of accomplishing a fundamental social change through such activity and arrives at the understanding that the conquest of power is unavoidable. Bernstein's theory, however, begins by declaring that this conquest is impossible. It concludes by affirming that socialism can only be introduced as a result of the trade-union struggle and parliamentary activity. For as seen by Bernstein, trade union and parliamentary action has a socialist character because it exercises a progressively socializing influence on capitalist economy.

We tried to show that this influence is purely imaginary. The relations between capitalist property and the capitalist State develop in entirely opposite directions, so that the daily practical activity of the present Social Democracy loses, in the last analysis, all connection with work for socialism. From the viewpoint of a movement for socialism, the trade-union struggle and our parliamentary practice are vastly important in so far as they make Socialistic the *awareness* , the consciousness, of the proletariat and help to organize it as a class. But once they are considered as instruments of the direct socialization of capitalist economy, they lose out not only their usual effectiveness but also cease being means of preparing the working class for the conquest of power. Eduard Bernstein and Konrad Schmidt suffer from a complete misunderstanding when they console themselves with the belief that even though the program of the party is reduced to work for social reforms and ordinary trade-union work, the final objective of the labor movement is not thereby discarded, for each forward step reaches beyond the given immediate aim and the socialist goal is implied as a tendency in the supposed advance.

That is certainly true about the present procedure of the German Social Democracy. It is true whenever a firm and conscious effort for conquest of political power impregnates the trade-union struggle and the work for social reforms. But if this effort is separated from the movement itself and social

reforms are made an end in themselves, then such activity not only does not lead to the final goal of socialism but moves in a precisely opposite direction.

Konrad Schmidt simply falls back on the idea that an apparently mechanical movement, once started, cannot stop by itself, because "one's appetite grows with the eating," and the working class will not supposedly content itself with reforms till the final socialist transformation is realized.

Now the last-mentioned condition is quite real. Its effectiveness is guaranteed by the very insufficiency of capitalist reforms. But the conclusion drawn from it could only be true if it were possible to construct an unbroken chain of augmented reforms leading from the capitalism of today to socialism. This is, of course, sheer fantasy. In accordance with the nature of things as they are, the chain breaks quickly, and the paths that the supposed forward movement can take from the point on are many and varied.

What will be the immediate result should our party change its general procedure to suit a viewpoint that wants to emphasize the practical results of our struggle, that is social reforms? As soon as "immediate results" become the principal aim of our activity, the clear-cut, irreconcilable point of view, which has meaning only in so far as it proposes to win power, will be found more and more inconvenient. The direct consequence of this will be the adoption by the party of a "policy of compensation," a policy of political trading, and an attitude of diffident, diplomatic conciliation. But this attitude cannot be continued for a long time. Since the social reforms can only offer an empty promise, the logical consequence of such a program must necessarily be disillusionment.

It is not true that socialism will arise automatically from the daily struggle of the working class. Socialism will be the consequence of (1), the growing contradictions of capitalist economy and (2), of the comprehension by the working class of the unavoidability of the suppression of these contradictions through a social transformation. When, in the manner of revisionism, the first condition is denied and the second rejected, the labor

movement finds itself reduced to a simple cooperative and reformist movement. We move here in a straight line toward the total abandonment of the class viewpoint.

This consequence also becomes evident when we investigate the general character of revisionism. It is obvious that revisionism does not wish to concede that its standpoint is that of the capitalist apologist. It does not join the bourgeois economists in denying the existence of the contradictions of capitalism. But, on the other hand, what precisely constitutes the fundamental point of revisionism and distinguishes it from the attitude taken by the Social Democracy up to now, is that it does not base its theory on the belief that the contradictions of capitalism will be suppressed as a result of the logical inner development of the present economic system.

We may say that the theory of revisionism occupies an intermediate place between two extremes. Revisionism does not expect to see the contradictions of capitalism mature. It does not propose to suppress these contradictions through a revolutionary transformation. It wants to lessen, to attenuate, the capitalist contradictions. So that the antagonism existing between production and exchange is to be mollified by the cessation of crises and the formation of capitalist combines. The antagonism between Capital and Labor is to be adjusted by bettering the situation of the workers and by the conservation of the middle classes. And the contradiction between the class State and society is to be liquidated through increased State control and the progress of democracy.

It is true that the present procedure of the Social Democracy does not consist in waiting for the antagonisms of capitalism to develop and in passing on, only then, to the task of suppressing them. On the contrary, the essence of revolutionary procedure is to be guided by the direction of this development, once it is ascertained, and inferring from this direction what consequences are necessary for the political struggle. Thus, the Social Democracy has combated tariff wars and militarism without waiting for their reactionary character to become fully evident. Bernstein’s procedure is not guided by a consideration of the development of capitalism, by the prospect of the aggravation of its contradictions. It is guided by the prospect

of the attenuation of these contradictions. He shows this when he speaks of the “adaptation” of capitalist economy.

Now when can such a conception be correct? If it is true that capitalism will continue to develop in the direction it takes at present, then its contradictions must necessarily become sharper and more aggravated instead of disappearing. The possibility of the attenuation of the contradictions of capitalism presupposes that the capitalist mode of production itself will stop its progress. In short, the general condition of Bernstein’s theory is the cessation of capitalist development.

This way, however, his theory condemns itself in a twofold manner.

In the first place, it manifests its *utopian* character in its stand on the establishment of socialism. For it is clear that a defective capitalist development cannot lead to a socialist transformation.

In the second place, Bernstein’s theory reveals its *reactionary* character when it refers to the rapid capitalist development that is taking place at present. Given the development of real capitalism, how can we explain, or rather state, Bernstein’s position?

We have demonstrated in the first chapter the baselessness of the economic conditions on which Bernstein builds his analysis of existing social relationships. We have seen that neither the credit system nor cartels can be said to be “means of adaptation” of capitalist economy. We have seen that not even the temporary cessation of crises nor the survival of the middle class can be regarded as symptoms of capitalist adaptation. But even though we should fail to take into account the erroneous character of all these details of Bernstein’s theory we cannot help but be stopped short by one feature common to all of them. Bernstein’s theory does not seize these manifestations of contemporary economic life as they appear in their organic relationship with the whole of capitalist development, with the complete economic mechanism of capitalism. His theory pulls these details

out of their living economic context. It treats them as *disjecta membra* (separate parts) of a lifeless machine.

Consider, for example, his conception of the adaptive effect of credit. If we recognize credit as a higher natural stage of the process of exchange and, therefore, of the contradictions inherent in capitalist exchange, we cannot at the same time see it as a mechanical means of adaptation existing outside of the process of exchange. It would be just as impossible to consider money, merchandise, and capital as "means of adaptation" of capitalism.

However, credit, like money, commodities and capital, is an organic link of capitalist economy at a certain stage of its development. Like them, it is an indispensable gear in the mechanism of capitalist economy, and at the same time, an instrument of destruction, since it aggravates the internal contradictions of capitalism.

The same thing is true about cartels and the new, perfected means of communication.

The same mechanical view is presented by Bernstein's attempt to describe the promise of the cessation of crises as a symptom of the "adaptation" of capitalist economy. For him, crises are simply derangements of the economic mechanism. With their cessation, he thinks, the mechanism could function well. But the fact is that crises are not "derangements" in the usual sense of the word. They are "derangements" without which capitalist economy could not develop at all. For if crises constitute the only method possible in capitalism—and therefore the normal method—of solving periodically the conflict existing between the unlimited extension of production and the narrow limits of the world market, then crises are an organic manifestation inseparable from capitalist economy.

In the "unhindered" advance of capitalist production lurks a threat to capitalism that is much greater than crises. It is the threat of the constant fall of the rate of profit, resulting not only from the contradiction between production and exchange, but from the growth of the productivity of labor

itself. The fall in the rate of profit has the extremely dangerous tendency of rendering impossible any enterprise for small and middle-sized capitals. It thus limits the new formation and therefore the extension of placements of capital.

And it is precisely crises that constitute the other consequence of the same process. As a result of their periodic *depreciation* of capital, crises bring a fall in the prices of means of production, a paralysis of a part of the active capital, and in time the increase of profits. They thus create the possibilities of the renewed advance of production. Crises therefore appear to be the instruments of rekindling the fire of capitalist development. Their cessation —not temporary cessation, but their total disappearance in the world market —would not lead to the further development of capitalist economy. It would destroy capitalism.

True to the mechanical view of his theory of adaptation, Bernstein forgets the necessity of crises as well as the necessity of new placements of small and middle-sized capitals. And that is why the constant reappearance of small capital seems to him to be the sign of the cessation of capitalist development though it is, in fact, a symptom of normal capitalist development.

It is important to note that there is a viewpoint from which all the above-mentioned phenomena are seen exactly as they have been presented by the theory of "adaptation." It is the viewpoint of the isolated (single) capitalist who reflects in his mind the economic facts around him just as they appear when refracted by the laws of competition. The isolated capitalist sees each organic part of the whole of our economy as an independent entity. He sees them as they act on him, the single capitalist. He therefore considers these facts to be simple "derangements" of simple "means of adaptation." For the isolated capitalist, it is true, crises are really simple derangements; the cessation of crises accords him a longer existence. As far as he is concerned, credit is only a means of "adapting" his insufficient productive forces to the needs of the market. And it seems to him that the cartel of which he becomes a member really suppresses industrial anarchy.

Revisionism is nothing else than a theoretic generalization made from the angle of the isolated capitalist. Where does this viewpoint belong theoretically if not in vulgar bourgeois economics?

All the errors of this school rest precisely on the conception that mistakes the phenomena of competition, as seen from the angle of the isolated capitalist, for the phenomena of the whole of capitalist economy. Just as Bernstein considers credit to be a means of "adaptation," to the needs of exchange. Vulgar economy, too, tries to find the antidote against the ills of capitalism in the phenomena of capitalism. Like Bernstein, it believes that it is possible to regulate capitalist economy. And in the manner of Bernstein, it arrives in time at the desire to palliate the contradictions of capitalism, that is, at the belief in the possibility of patching up the sores of capitalism. It ends up by subscribing to a program of reaction. It ends up in a utopia.

The theory of revisionism can therefore be defined in the following way. It is a theory of standing still in the socialist movement built, with the aid of vulgar economy, on a theory of capitalist standstill.

Chapter 6: Economic Development and Socialism

The greatest conquest of the developing proletarian movement has been the discovery of grounds of support for the realization of socialism in the *economic condition* of capitalist society. As a result of this discovery, socialism was changed from an "ideal" dreamt of by humanity for thousands of years to a thing of *historic necessity* .

Bernstein denies the existence of the economic conditions for socialism in the society of today. On this count his reasoning has undergone an interesting evolution. At first, in the *Neue Zeit* , he simply contested the rapidity of the process of concentration taking place in industry. He based his position on a comparison of the occupational statistics of Germany in 1882 and 1895. In order to use these figures for his purpose, he was obliged to proceed in an entirely summary and mechanical fashion. In the most favorable case, he could not, even by demonstrating the persistence of middle-sized enterprises, weaken in any the Marxian analysis because the latter does not suppose as a condition for the realization of socialism either a definite rate of concentration of industry—that is, a definite *delay* of the realization of socialism—or, as we have already shown, the *absolute disappearance* of small capitals, usually described as the disappearance of the petit bourgeoisie.

In the course of the latest development of his ideas Bernstein furnishes us, in his book, a new assortment of proofs: the statistics of *shareholding societies* . These statistics are used in order to prove that the number of shareholders increases constantly and as a result the capitalist class does not become smaller but grows bigger. It is surprising that Bernstein has so little acquaintance with his material. And it is astonishing how poorly he utilizes the existing data on his own behalf.

If he wanted to disprove the Marxian law of industrial development by referring to the condition of shareholding societies, he should have resorted to entirely different figures. Anybody who is acquainted with the history of

shareholding societies in Germany knows that their average foundation capital has *diminished* almost constantly. Thus, while before 1871 their average foundation capital reached the figure of 10.8 million marks, it was only 4.01 million marks in 1871, 3.8 million marks in 1873, less than a million from 1882 to 1887, 0.52 million in 1891 and only 0.62 million in 1892. After this date the figures oscillated around 1 million marks, falling to 1.78 in 1895 and to 1.19 in the course of the first half of 1897. (Van de Borght: *Handwörterbuch der Staatsswissenschaften* , 1.)

Those are surprising figures. Using them, Bernstein hoped to show the existence of a counter-Marxian tendency for retransformation of large enterprises into small ones. The obvious answer to his attempt is the following. If you are to prove anything at all by means of your statistics, you must first show that they refer to the *same* branches of industry. You must not show that small enterprises really replace large ones, that they do not. Instead, they appear only where small enterprises or even artisan industries were the rule before. This, however, you cannot show to be true. The statistical passage of immense shareholding societies to middle-size and small enterprises can be explained only by referring to the fact that the system of shareholding societies continues to penetrate new branches of production. Before, only a small number of large enterprises were organized as shareholding societies. Gradually shareholding organizations have won middle-size and even small enterprises. Today we can observe shareholding societies with a capital of below 1,000 marks.

Now, what is the economic significance of the extension of the system of shareholding societies? Economically, the spread of shareholding societies stands for the growing socialization of production under the capitalist form —socialization not only of large but also of middle-size and small production. The extension of shareholding does not, therefore, contradict Marxist theory but on the contrary, confirms it emphatically.

What does the economic phenomenon of a shareholding society actually amount to? It represents, on the one hand, the unification of a number of small fortunes into a large capital of production. It stands, on the other hand, for the separation of production from capitalist ownership. That is, it

denotes a double victory being won over the capitalist mode of production —but still on a capitalist base.

What is the meaning, therefore, of the statistics cited by Bernstein according to which an ever-greater number of shareholders participate in capitalist enterprises? These statistics go on to demonstrate precisely the following: at present a capitalist enterprise does not correspond, as before, to a single proprietor of capital but to a number of capitalists. Consequently, *the economic notion of "capitalist" no longer signifies an isolated individual. The industrial capitalist of today is a collective person composed of hundreds and even of thousands of individuals. The category "capitalist" has itself become a social category. It has become "socialized"—within the frame-work of capitalist society.*

In that case, how shall we explain Bernstein's belief that the phenomenon of share-holding societies stands for the dispersion and not the concentration of capital? Why does he see the extension of capitalist property where Marx saw its suppression?

That is a simple economic error. By "capitalist," Bernstein does not mean a category of production but the right to property. To him, "capitalist" is not an economic unit but a fiscal unit. And "capital" is for him not a factor of production but simply a certain quantity of money. That is why in his English sewing thread trust he does not see the fusion of 12,300 persons with money into a single capitalist unit but 12,300 different capitalists. That is why the engineer Schulze whose wife's dowry brought him a large number of shares from stockholder Mueller is also a capitalist for Bernstein. That is why for Bernstein the entire world seems to swarm with capitalists.

Here too, the theoretic base of his economic error is his "popularization" of socialism. For this is what he does. By transporting the concept of capitalism from its productive relations to property relations, and by speaking of simple individuals instead of speaking of entrepreneurs, he moves the question of socialism from the domain of production into the domain of relations of fortune—that is, from the relation between Capital and Labor to the relation between poor and rich.

In this manner we are merrily led from Marx and Engels to the author of *The Evangel of the Poor Fisherman* . There is this difference, however. Weitling, with the sure instinct of the proletarian, saw in the opposition between the poor and the rich, the class antagonisms in their primitive form, and wanted to make these antagonisms a lever of the movement for socialism. Bernstein, on the other hand, locates the realization of socialism in the possibility of making the poor rich. That is, he locates it in the attenuation of class antagonisms and therefore in the petty bourgeoisie.

True, Bernstein does not limit himself to the statistics of incomes. He furnishes statistics of economic enterprises, especially those of the following countries: Germany, France, England, Switzerland, Austria and the United States. But these statistics are not the comparative figures of *different periods* in each country but of each period in different countries. We are not therefore offered (with the exception of Germany where he repeats the old contrast between 1895 and 1892), a comparison of the statistics of enterprises of a given country at different epochs but the *absolute* figures for different countries: England in 1891, France in 1894, United States in 1890, etc.

He reaches the following conclusion: “Though it is true that large exploitation is already supreme in industry today, it nevertheless, represents, including the enterprises dependent on large exploitation, even in a country as developed in Prussia, *only half of the population occupied in production* .” This is also true about Germany, England, Belgium, etc.

What does he actually prove here? He proves not the existence of such or such a *tendency of economic development* but merely the *absolute relation of forces* of different forms of enterprise, or put in other words, the absolute relations of the various classes in our society.

Now if one wants to prove in this manner the impossibility of realizing socialism one’s reasoning must rest on the theory according to which the result of social efforts is decided by the relation of the numerical material

forces of the elements in the struggle, that is, by the factor of *violence* . In other words, Bernstein, who always thunders against Blanquism, himself falls into the grossest Blanquist error. There is this difference, however. To the Blanquists, who represented a socialist and revolutionary tendency, the possibility of the economic realization of socialism appeared quite natural. On this possibility they built the chances of a violent revolution—even by a small minority. Bernstein, on the contrary, infers from the numerical insufficiency of a socialist majority, the impossibility of the economic realization of socialism. The Social-Democracy *does not, however, expect to attain its aim either as a result of the victorious violence of a minority or through the numerical superiority of a majority. It sees socialism come as a result of economic necessity—and the comprehension of that necessity—leading to the suppression of capitalism by the working masses.* And this necessity manifests itself above all in the anarchy of capitalism.

What is Bernstein's position on the decisive question of anarchy in capitalist economy? He denies only the great general crises. He does not deny partial and national crises. In other words, he refuses to see a great deal of the anarchy of capitalism; he sees only a little of it. He is—to use Marx's illustration—like the foolish virgin who had a child "who was only very small." But the misfortune is that in matters like economic anarchy little and much are equally bad. If Bernstein recognizes the existence of a little of this anarchy, we may point out to him that by the mechanism of the market economy this bit of anarchy will be extended to unheard of proportions, to end in collapse. But if Bernstein hopes to transform gradually his bit of anarchy into order and harmony while maintaining the system of commodity production, he again falls into one of the fundamental errors of bourgeois political economy according to which the mode of exchange is independent of the mode of production.

This is not the place for a lengthy demonstration of Bernstein's surprising confusion concerning the most elementary principles of political economy. But there is one point—to which we are led by the fundamental questions of capitalist anarchy—that must be clarified immediately.

Bernstein declares that Marx's law of surplus value is a simple abstraction. In political economy a statement of this sort obviously constitutes an insult. But if surplus value is only a simple abstraction, if it is only a figment of the mind—then every normal citizen who has done military duty and pays his taxes on time has the same right as Karl Marx to fashion his individual absurdity, to make his own law of value. "Marx has as much right to neglect the qualities of commodities till they are no more than the incarnation of quantities of simple human labor as have the economists of the Böhm-Jevons school to make an abstraction of all the qualities of commodities outside of their utility."

That is, to Bernstein, Marx's social labor and Menger's abstract utility are quite similar—pure abstractions. Bernstein forgets completely that Marx's abstraction is not an invention. It is a discovery. It does not exist in Marx's head but in market economy. It has not an imaginary existence, but a real social existence, so real that it can be cut, hammered, weighed and put in the form of the money. The abstract human labor discovered by Marx is, in its developed form, no other than *money* . That is precisely one of the greatest of Marx's discoveries, while to all bourgeois political economists, from the first of the mercantilists to the last of the classicists, the essence of money has remained a mystic enigma.

The Boehm-Jevons abstract utility is, in fact, a conceit of the mind. Or stated more correctly, it is a representation of intellectual emptiness, a private absurdity, for which neither capitalism nor any other society can be made responsible, but only vulgar bourgeois economy itself. Hugging their brain-child, Bernstein, Böhm and Jevons, and the entire subjective fraternity, can remain twenty years or more before the mystery of money, without arriving at a solution that is different from the one reached by any cobbler, namely that money is also a "useful" thing.

Bernstein has lost all comprehension of Marx's law of value. Anybody with a small understanding of Marxian economics can see that without the law of value, Marx's doctrine is incomprehensible. Or to speak more concretely—for him who does not understand the nature of the commodity and its

exchange the entire economy of capitalism, with all its concatenations, must of necessity remain an enigma.

What precisely was the key which enabled Marx to open the door to the secrets of capitalist phenomena and solve, as if in play, problems that were not even suspected by the greatest minds of classic bourgeois economy? It was his conception of capitalist economy as an historic phenomenon—not merely in the sense recognized in the best of cases by the classic economists, that is, when it concerns the feudal past of capitalism—but also in so far as it concerns the socialist future of the world. The secret of Marx's theory of value, of his analysis of the problem of money, of his theory of capital, of the theory of the rate of profit and consequently of the entire existing economic system is found in the transitory character of capitalist economy, the inevitability of its collapse leading—and this is only another aspect of the same phenomenon—to socialism. It is only because Marx looked at capitalism from the socialist's viewpoint, that is from the historic viewpoint, that he was able to decipher the hieroglyphics of capitalist economy. And it is precisely because he took the socialist viewpoint as a point of departure for his analysis of bourgeois society that he was in the position to give a scientific base to the socialist movement.

This is the measure by which we evaluate Bernstein's remarks. He complains of the "dualism" found everywhere in Marx's monumental *Capital* . "The work wishes to be a scientific study and prove, at the same time, a thesis that was completely elaborated a long time before the editing of the book; it is based on a schema that already contains the result to which he wants to lead. The return to the *Communist Manifesto* (that is the socialist goal!— *R.L.*), proves the existence of vestiges of utopianism in Marx's doctrine."

But what is Marx's "dualism" if not the dualism of the socialist future and the capitalist present? It is the dualism of Capitalism and Labor, the dualism of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. It is the scientific reflection of the dualism existing in bourgeois society, the dualism of the class antagonism writhing inside the social order of capitalism.

Bernstein's recognition of this theoretic dualism in Marx as "a survival of utopianism" is really his naïve avowal that he denies the class antagonisms in capitalism. It is his confession that socialism has become for him only a "survival of utopianism." What is Bernstein's "monism"—Bernstein's unity—but the eternal unity of the capitalist regime, the unity of the former socialist who has renounced his aim and has decided to find in bourgeois society, one and immutable, the goal of human development?

Bernstein does not see in the economic structure of capitalism the development that leads to socialism. But in order to conserve his socialist program, at least in form, he is obliged to take refuge in an idealist construction placed outside of all economic development. He is obliged to transform socialism itself from a definite historical phase of social development into an abstract "principle."

That is why the "cooperative principle"—the meager decantation of socialism by which Bernstein wishes to garnish capitalist economy—appears as a concession made not to the socialist future of society but to Bernstein's own socialist past.

Chapter 7: Cooperatives, Unions, Democracy

Bernstein's socialism offers to the workers the prospect of sharing in the wealth of society. The poor are to become rich. How will this socialism be brought about? His article in the *Neue Zeit* (*Problems of Socialism*) contains only vague allusions to this question. Adequate information, however, can be found in his book.

Bernstein's socialism is to be realized with the aid of these two instruments: labor unions—or as Bernstein himself characterizes them, economic democracy—and cooperatives. The first will suppress industrial profit; the second will do away with commercial profit.

Cooperatives—especially cooperatives in the field of production constitute a hybrid form in the midst of capitalism. They can be described as small units of socialized production within capitalist exchange.

But in capitalist economy exchanges dominate production. As a result of competition, the complete domination of the process of production by the interests of capital—that is, pitiless exploitation—becomes a condition for the survival of each enterprise. The domination of capital over the process of production expresses itself in the following ways. Labor is intensified. The work day is lengthened or shortened, according to the situation of the market. And, depending on the requirements of the market, labor is either employed or thrown back into the street. In other words, use is made of all methods that enable an enterprise to stand up against its competitors in the market. The workers forming a cooperative in the field of production are thus faced with the contradictory necessity of governing themselves with the utmost absolutism. They are obliged to take toward themselves the role of capitalist entrepreneur—a contradiction that accounts for the usual failure of production cooperatives which either become pure capitalist enterprises or, if the workers' interests continue to predominate, end by dissolving.

Bernstein has himself taken note of these facts. But it is evident that he has not understood them. For, together with Mrs. Potter-Webb, he explains the failure of production cooperatives in England by their lack of "discipline." But what is so superficially and flatly called here "discipline" is nothing else than the natural absolutist regime of capitalism, which it is plain, the workers cannot successfully use against themselves.

Producers' cooperatives can survive within capitalist economy only if they manage to suppress, by means of some detour, the capitalist-controlled contradictions between the mode of production and the mode of exchange. And they can accomplish this only by removing themselves artificially from the influence of the laws of free competition. And they can succeed in doing the last only when they assure themselves beforehand of a constant circle of consumers, that is, when they assure themselves of a constant market.

It is the consumers' cooperative that can offer this service to its brother in the field of production. Here—and not in Oppenheimer's distinction between cooperatives that produce and cooperatives that sell—is the secret sought by Bernstein: the explanation for the invariable failure of producers' cooperatives functioning independently and their survival when they are backed by consumers' organizations.

If it is true that the possibilities of existence of producers' cooperatives within capitalism are bound up with the possibilities of existence of consumers' cooperatives, then the scope of the former is limited, in the most favorable of cases, to the small local market and to the manufacture of articles serving immediate needs, especially food products. Consumers' and therefore producers' cooperatives, are excluded from the most important branches of capital production—the textile, mining, metallurgical and petroleum industries, machine construction, locomotive and ship-building. For this reason alone (forgetting for the moment their hybrid character), cooperatives in the field of production cannot be seriously considered as the instrument of a general social transformation. The establishment of producers' cooperatives on a wide scale would suppose, first of all, the suppression of the world market, the breaking up of the present world

economy into small local spheres of production and exchange. The highly developed, wide-spread capitalism of our time is expected to fall back to the merchant economy of the Middle Ages.

Within the framework of present society, producers' cooperatives are limited to the role of simple annexes to consumers' cooperatives. It appears, therefore, that the latter must be the beginning of the proposed social change. But this way the expected reform of society by means of cooperatives ceases to be an offensive against capitalist production. That is, it ceases to be an attack against the principal bases of capitalist economy. It becomes, instead, a struggle against commercial capital, especially small and middle-sized commercial capital. It becomes an attack made on the twigs of the capitalist tree.

According to Bernstein, trade unions too, are a means of attack against capitalism in the field of production. We have already shown that trade unions cannot give the workers a determining influence over production. Trade unions can determine neither the dimensions of production nor the technical progress of production.

This much may be said about the purely economic side of the "struggle of the rate of wages against the rate of profit," as Bernstein labels the activity of the trade union. It does not take place in the blue of the sky. It takes place within the well-defined framework of the law of wages. The law of wages is not shattered but applied by trade-union activity.

According to Bernstein, it is the trade unions that lead—in the general movement for the emancipation of the working class—the real attack against the rate of industrial profit. According to Bernstein, trade unions have the task of transforming the rate of industrial profit into "rates of wages." The fact is that trade unions are least able to execute an economic offensive against profit. Trade unions are nothing more than the organized *defense* of labor power against the attacks of profit. They express the resistance offered by the working class to the oppression of capitalist economy.

On the one hand, trade unions have the function of influencing the situation in the labor-power market. But this influence is being constantly overcome by the proletarianization of the middle layers of our society, a process which continually brings new merchandise on the labor market. The second function of the trade unions is to ameliorate the condition of the workers. That is, they attempt to increase the share of the social wealth going to the working class. This share, however, is being reduced with the fatality of a natural process by the growth of the productivity of labor. One does not need to be a Marxist to notice this. It suffices to read Rodbertus' *In Explanation of the Social Question* .

In other words, the objective conditions of capitalist society transform the two economic functions of the trade unions into a sort of labor of Sisyphus, [2] which is, nevertheless, indispensable. For as a result of the activity of his trade unions, the worker succeeds in obtaining for himself the rate of wages due to him in accordance with the situation of the labor-power market. As a result of trade union activity, the capitalist law of wages is applied and the effect of the depressing tendency of economic development is paralyzed, or to be more exact, attenuated.

However, the transformation of the trade union into an instrument for the progressive reduction of profit in favor of wages presupposes the following social conditions; first, the cessation of the proletarianization of the middle strata of our society; secondly, a stoppage of the growth of productivity of labor. We have in both cases *a return to pre-capitalist conditions* ,

Cooperatives and trade unions are totally incapable of transforming the *capitalist mode of production* . This is really understood by Bernstein, though in a confused manner. For he refers to cooperatives and trade unions as a means of reducing the profit of the capitalists and thus enriching the workers. In this way, he renounces the struggle against the *capitalist mode of production* and attempts to direct the socialist movement to struggle against "capitalist distribution." Again and again, Bernstein refers to socialism as an effort towards a "just, juster and still more just" mode of distribution. (*Vorwärts* , March 26, 1899).

It cannot be denied that the direct cause leading the popular masses into the socialist movement is precisely the “unjust” mode of distribution characteristic of capitalism. When the Social-Democracy struggles for the socialization of the entire economy, it aspires therewith also to a “just” distribution of the social wealth. But, guided by Marx’s observation that the mode of distribution of a given epoch is a natural consequence of the mode of production of that epoch, the Social-Democracy does not struggle against distribution in the framework of capitalist production. It struggles instead for the suppression of capitalist production itself. In a word, the Social-Democracy wants to establish the mode of socialist distribution by suppressing the capitalist mode of production. Bernstein’s method, on the contrary, proposes to combat the capitalist mode of distribution in the hopes of gradually establishing, in this way, the socialist mode of production.

What, in that case, is the basis of Bernstein’s program for the reform of society? Does it find support in definite tendencies of capitalist production? No. In the first place, he denies such tendencies. In the second place, the socialist transformation of production is for him the effect and not the cause of distribution. He cannot give his program a materialist base, because he has already overthrown the aims and the means of the movement for socialism, and therefore its economic conditions. As a result, he is obliged to construct himself an idealist base.

“Why represent socialism as the consequence of economic compulsion?” he complains. “Why degrade man’s understanding, his feeling for justice, his will?” (*Vorwärts* , March 26, 1899). Bernstein’s superlatively just distribution is to be attained thanks to man’s free will; man’s will acting not because of economic necessity, since this will is only an instrument, but because of man’s comprehension of justice, because of man’s *idea of justice* .

We thus quite happily return to the principle of justice, to the old war horse on which the reformers of the earth have rocked for ages, for the lack of surer means of historic transportation. We return to the lamentable Rosinate

on which the Don Quixotes of history have galloped towards the great reform of the earth, always to come home with their eyes blackened.

The relation of the poor to the rich, taken as a base for socialism, the principle of cooperation as the content of socialism, the "most just distribution" as its aim, and the idea of justice as its only historic legitimization—with how much more force, more with and more fire did Weitling defend that sort of socialism fifty years ago. However, that genius of a tailor did not know scientific socialism. If today, the conception torn into bits by Marx and Engels a half century ago is patched up and presented to the proletariat as the last world of social science, that too, is the art of a tailor but it has nothing of a genius about it.

Trade unions and cooperatives are the economic support for the theory of revisionism. Its principal political condition is the growth of democracy. The present manifestations of political reaction are to Bernstein only "displacement." He considers them accidental, momentary, and suggests that they are not to be considered in the elaboration of the general directives of the labor movement.

To Bernstein, democracy is an inevitable stage in the development of society. To him, as to the bourgeois theoreticians of liberalism, democracy is the great fundamental law of historic development, the realization of which is served by all the forces of political life. However, Bernstein's thesis is completely false. Presented in this absolute force, it appears as a petty-bourgeois vulgarization of results of a very short phase of bourgeois development, the last twenty-five or thirty years. We reach entirely different conclusions when we examine the historic development of democracy a little closer and consider, at the same time, the general political history of capitalism.

Democracy has been found in the most dissimilar social formations: in primitive communist groups, in the slave states of antiquity and in medieval communes. And similarly, absolutism and constitutional monarchy are to be found under the most varied economic orders. When capitalism began, with the first production of commodities, it resorted to a democratic constitution

in the municipal-communes of the Middle Ages. Later, when it developed to manufacturing, capitalism found its corresponding political form in the absolute monarchy. Finally, as a developed industrial economy, it brought into being in France the democratic republic of 1793, the absolute monarchy of Napoleon I, the nobles' monarchy of the Restoration period (1850-1830), the bourgeois constitutional monarchy of Louis-Philippe, then again, the democratic republic, and against the monarchy of Napoleon III, and finally, for the third time, the Republic.

In Germany, the only truly democratic institution—universal suffrage—is not a conquest won by bourgeois liberalism. Universal suffrage in Germany was an instrument for the fusion of the small States. It is only in this sense that it has any importance for the development of the German bourgeoisie, which is otherwise quite satisfied with semi-feudal constitutional monarchy. In Russia, capitalism prospered for a long time under the regime of oriental absolutism, without having the bourgeoisie manifest the least desire in the world to introduce democracy. In Austria, universal suffrage was above all a safety line thrown to a foundering and decomposing monarchy. In Belgium, the conquest of universal suffrage by the labor movement was undoubtedly due to the weakness of the local militarism, and consequently to the special geographic and political situation of the country. But we have here a "bit of democracy" that has been won not by the bourgeoisie but *against it* .

The uninterrupted victory of democracy, which to our revisionism as well as to bourgeois liberalism, appears as a great fundamental law of human history and, especially, modern history is shown upon closer examination to be a phantom. No absolute and general relation can be constructed between capitalist development and democracy. The political form of a given country is always the result of the composite of all the existing political factors, domestic as well as foreign. It admits within its limits all variations of the scale from absolute monarchy to the democratic republic.

We must abandon, therefore, all hope of establishing democracy as a general law of historical development even within the framework of modern society. Turning to the present phase of bourgeois society, we observe here, too, political factors which, instead of assuring the realization of Bernstein's

schema, led rather to the abandonment by bourgeois society of the democratic conquests won up to now.

Democratic institutions—and this is of the greatest significance—have completely exhausted their function as aids in the development of bourgeois society. Insofar as they were necessary to bring about the fusion of small States and the creation of large modern States (Germany, Italy), they are no longer indispensable at present. Economic development has meanwhile affected an internal organic cicatrization.

The same thing can be said concerning the transformation of the entire political and administrative State machinery from feudal or semi-feudal mechanism to capitalist mechanism. While this transformation has been historically inseparable from the development of democracy, it has been realized today to such an extent that the purely democratic "ingredients" of society, such as universal suffrage and the republican State form, may be suppressed without having the administration, the State finances, or the military organization find it necessary to return to the forms they had before the March Revolution. [3]

If liberalism as such is now absolutely useless to bourgeois society it has become, on the other hand, a direct impediment to capitalism from other standpoints. Two factors dominate completely the political life of contemporary States: world politics and the labor movement. Each is only a different aspect of the present phase of capitalist development.

As a result of the development of the world economy and the aggravation and generalization of competition on the world market, militarism and the policy of big navies have become, as instruments of world politics, a decisive factor in the interior as well as in the exterior life of the great States. If it is true that world politics and militarism represent a rising tendency in the present phase of capitalism, then bourgeois democracy must logically move in a descending line.

In Germany the era of great armament, began in 1893, and the policy of world politics inaugurated with the seizure of Kiao-Cheou were paid for immediately with the following sacrificial victim: the decomposition of liberalism, the deflation of the Centre Party, which passed from opposition to government. The recent elections to the Reichstag of 1907 unrolling under the sign of the German colonial policy were, at the same time, the historical burial of German liberalism.

If foreign politics push the bourgeoisie into the arms of reaction this is no less true about domestic politics—thanks to the rise of the working class. Bernstein shows that he recognizes this when he makes the social-democratic "legend," which "wants to swallow everything"—in other words, the socialist efforts of the working class—responsible for the desertion of the liberal bourgeoisie. He advises the proletariat to disavow its socialist aim so that the mortally frightened liberals might come out of the mousehole of reaction. Making the suppression of the socialist labor movement an essential condition for the preservation of bourgeois democracy, he proves in a striking manner that this democracy is in complete contradiction with the inner tendency of development of the present society. He proves, at the same time, that the socialist movement is itself a *direct product* of this tendency.

But he proves, at the same time, still another thing. By making the denouncement of the socialist aim an essential condition of the resurrection of bourgeois democracy, he shows how inexact is the claim that bourgeois democracy is an indispensable condition of the socialist movement and the victory of socialism. Bernstein's reasoning exhausts itself in a vicious circle. His conclusion swallows his premises.

The solution is quite simple. In view of that fact that bourgeois liberalism has given up its ghost from fear of the growing labor movement and its final aim, we conclude that the socialist labor movement is today the *only* support for that which is not the goal of the socialist movement—democracy. We must conclude that democracy can have no support. We must conclude that the socialist movement is not bound to bourgeois

democracy but that, on the contrary, the fate of democracy is bound up with the socialist movement. We must conclude from this that democracy does not acquire greater chances of survival, as the socialist movement becomes sufficiently strong to struggle against the reactionary consequences of world politics and the bourgeois desertion of democracy. He who would strengthen democracy should want to strengthen and not weaken the socialist movement. He who renounces the struggle for socialism renounces both the labor movement and democracy.

Chapter 8: Conquest of Political Power

The fate of democracy is bound up, we have seen, with the fate of the labor movement. But does the development of democracy render superfluous or impossible a proletarian revolution, that is, the conquest of political power by the workers?

Bernstein settles the question by weighing minutely the good and bad sides of social reform and social revolution. He does it almost in the same manner in which cinnamon or pepper is weighed out in a consumers' cooperative store. He sees the legislative course of historic development as the action of "intelligence," while the revolutionary course of historic development is for him the action of "feeling." Reformist activity, he recognizes as a slow method of historic progress, revolution as a rapid method of progress. In legislation he sees a methodical force; in revolution, a spontaneous force.

We have known for a long time that the petty-bourgeoisie reformer finds "good" and "bad" sides in everything. He nibbles a bit at all grasses. But the real course of events is little affected by such combination. The carefully gathered little pile of the "good sides" of all things possible collapses at the first flip of history. Historically, legislative reform and the revolutionary method function in accordance with influences that are much more profound than the consideration of the advantages or inconveniences of one method or another.

In the history of bourgeois society, legislative reform served to strengthen progressively the rising class till the latter was sufficiently strong to seize political power, to suppress the existing juridical system and to construct itself a new one. Bernstein, thundering against the conquest of political power as a theory of Blanquist violence, has the misfortune of labeling as a Blanquist error that has always been the pivot and the motive force of human history. From the first appearance of class societies having the class struggle as the essential content of their history, the conquest of political power has been the aim of all rising classes. Here is the starting point and

end of every historic period. This can be seen in the long struggle of the Latin peasantry against the financiers and nobility of ancient Rome, in the struggle of the medieval nobility against the bishops and in the struggle of the artisans against the nobles, in the cities of the Middle Ages. In modern times, we see it in the struggle of the bourgeoisie against feudalism.

Legislative reform and revolution are not different methods of historic development that can be picked out at the pleasure from the counter of history, just as one chooses hot or cold sausages. Legislative reform and revolution are different *factors* in the development of class society. They condition and complement each other, and are at the same time reciprocally exclusive, as are the north and south poles, the bourgeoisie and proletariat.

Every legal constitution is the *product* of a revolution. In the history of classes, revolution is the act of political creation, while legislation is the political expression of the life of a society that has already come into being. Work for reform does not contain its own force independent from revolution. During every historic period, work for reforms is carried on only in the direction given to it by the impetus of the last revolution and continues as long as the impulsion from the last revolution continues to make itself felt. Or, to put it more concretely, in each historic period work for reforms is carried on only in the framework of the social form created by the last revolution. Here is the kernel of the problem.

It is contrary to history to represent work for reforms as a long-drawn out revolution and revolution as a condensed series of reforms. A social transformation and a legislative reform do not differ according to their duration but according to their content. The secret of historic change through the utilization of political power resides precisely in the transformation of simple quantitative modification into a new quality, or to speak more concretely, in the passage of an historic period from one given form of society to another.

That is why people who pronounce themselves in favor of the method of legislative reform *in place and in contradistinction to* the conquest of political power and social revolution, do not really choose a more tranquil,

calmer and slower road to the *same* goal, but a *different* goal. Instead of taking a stand for the establishment of a new society they take a stand for surface modifications of the old society. If we follow the political conceptions of revisionism, we arrive at the same conclusion that is reached when we follow the economic theories of revisionism. Our program becomes not the realization of *socialism* , but the reform of *capitalism* ; not the suppression of the wage labor system but the diminution of exploitation, that is, the suppression of the abuses of capitalism instead of suppression of capitalism itself.

Does the reciprocal role of legislative reform and revolution apply only to the class struggle of the past? It is possible that now, as a result of the development of the bourgeois juridical system, the function of moving society from one historic phase to another belongs to legislative reform and that the conquest of State power by the proletariat has really become "an empty phrase," as Bernstein puts it?

The very opposite is true. What distinguishes bourgeois society from other class societies—from ancient society and from the social order of the Middle Ages? Precisely the fact that class domination does not rest on "acquired rights" but on *real economic relations* —the fact that wage labor is not a juridical relation, but purely an economic relation. In our juridical system there is not a single legal formula for the class domination of today. The few remaining traces of such formulae of class domination are (as that concerning servants), survivals of feudal society.

How can wage slavery be suppressed the "legislative way," if wage slavery is not expressed the laws? Bernstein, who would do away with capitalism by means of legislative reforms, finds himself in the same situation as Uspensky's Russian policeman who said: "Quickly I seized the rascal by the collar! But what do I see? The confounded fellow has no collar!" And that is precisely Bernstein's difficulty.

"All previous societies were based on an antagonism between an oppressing class and an oppressed class" (*Communist Manifesto*). But in the preceding phases of modern society, this antagonism was expressed in

distinctly determined juridical relations and could, especially because of that, accord, to a certain extent, a place to new relations within the framework of the old. “In the midst of serfdom, the serf raised himself to the rank of a member of the town community” (*Communist Manifesto*). How was that made possible? It was made possible by the progressive of all feudal privileges in the environs of the city: the corvée, the right to special dress, the inheritance tax, the lord’s claim to the best cattle, the personal levy, marriage under duress, the right to succession, etc., which all together constituted serfdom.

In the same way, the small bourgeoisie of the Middle Ages succeeded in raising itself, while it was still under the yoke of feudal absolutism, to the rank of bourgeoisie (*Communist Manifesto*). By what means? By means of the formal partial suppression or complete loosening of the corporative bonds, by the progressive transformation of the fiscal administration and of the army.

Consequently, when we consider the question from the abstract viewpoint, not from the historic viewpoint, we can *imagine* (in view of the former class relations) a legal passage, according to the reformist method, from feudal society to bourgeois society. But what do we see in reality? In reality, we see that legal reforms not only do not obviate the seizure of political power by the bourgeoisie but have, on the contrary, prepared for it and led to it. A formal social-political transformation was indispensable for the abolition of slavery as well as for the complete suppression of feudalism.

But the situation is entirely different now. No law obliges the proletariat to submit itself to the yoke of capitalism. Poverty, the lack of means of production, obliges the proletariat to submit itself to the yoke of capitalism. And no law in the world can give to the proletariat the means of production while it remains in the framework of bourgeois society, for not laws but economic development have torn the means of production from the producers’ possession.

And neither is the exploitation inside the system of wage labor based on laws. The level of wages is not fixed by legislation but by economic factors.

The phenomenon of capitalist exploitation does not rest on a legal disposition but on the purely economic fact that labor power plays in this exploitation the role of a merchandise possessing, among other characteristics, the agreeable quality of producing value— *more* than the value it consumes in the form of the laborer's means of subsistence. In short, the fundamental relations of the domination of the capitalist class cannot be transformed by means of legislative reforms, on the basis of capitalist society, because these relations have not been introduced by bourgeois laws, nor have they received the form of such laws. Apparently, Bernstein is not aware of this because he speaks of "socialist reforms." On the other hand, he seems to express implicit recognition of this when he writes, on page 10 of his book, "the economic motive acts freely today, while formerly it was masked by all kinds of relations of domination by all sorts of ideology."

It is one of the peculiarities of the capitalist order that within it all the elements of the future society first assume, in their development, a form not approaching socialism but, on the contrary, a form moving more and more away from socialism. Production takes on a progressively increasing social character. But under what form is the social character of capitalist production expressed? It is expressed in the form of the large enterprise, in the form of the shareholding concern, the cartel, within which the capitalist antagonisms, capitalist exploitation, the oppression of labor-power, are augmented to the extreme.

In the army, capitalist development leads to the extension of obligatory military service to the reduction of the time of service and consequently to a material approach to a popular militia. But all of this takes place under the form of modern militarism in which the domination of the people by the militarist State and the class character of the State manifest themselves most clearly.

In the field of political relations, the development of democracy brings—in the measure that it finds a favorable soil—the participation of all popular strata in political life and, consequently, some sort of "people's State." But this participation takes the form of bourgeois parliamentarism, in which

class antagonisms and class domination are not done away with, but are, on the contrary, displayed in the open. Exactly because capitalist development moves through these contradictions, it is necessary to extract the kernel of socialist society from its capitalist shell. Exactly for this reason the proletariat must seize political power and completely suppress the capitalist system.

Of course, Bernstein draws other conclusions. If the development of democracy leads to the aggravation and not to the lessening of capitalist antagonisms, "the Social-Democracy," he answers us, "in order not to render its task more difficult, must by all means try to stop social reforms and the extension of democratic institutions," (page 71). Indeed, that would be the right thing to do if the Social-Democracy found to its taste, in the petty-bourgeois manner, the futile task of picking for itself all the good sides of history and rejecting the bad sides of history. However, in that case, it should at the same time "try to stop" capitalism in general, for there is no doubt that the latter is the rascal placing all these obstacles in the way of socialism. But capitalism furnishes besides the *obstacles* also the only *possibilities* of realizing the socialist program. The same can be said about democracy.

If democracy has become superfluous or annoying to the bourgeoisie, it is on the contrary necessary and indispensable to the working class. It is necessary to the working class because it creates the political forms (autonomous administration, electoral rights, etc.) which will serve the proletariat as fulcrums in its task of transforming bourgeois society. Democracy is indispensable to the working class because only through the exercise of its democratic rights, in the struggle for democracy, can the proletariat become aware of its class interests and its historic task.

In a word, democracy is indispensable not because it renders superfluous the conquest of political power by the proletariat but because it renders this conquest of power both *necessary* and *possible* . When Engels, in his preface to the *Class Struggles in France* , revised the tactics of the modern labor movement and urged the legal struggle as opposed to the barricades, he did not have in mind—this comes out of every line of the preface—the

question of a definite conquest of political power, but the contemporary daily struggle. He did not have in mind the attitude that the proletariat must take toward the capitalist State at the time of the seizure of power but the attitude of the proletariat while in the bounds of the capitalist State. Engels was giving directions to the proletariat *oppressed* , and not to the proletariat victorious.

On the other hand, Marx's well-known sentence on the agrarian question in England (Bernstein leans on it heavily), in which he says: "We shall probably succeed easier by buying the estates of the landlords," does not refer to the stand of the proletariat *before, but after its victory* . For there evidently can be a question of buying the property of the old dominant class only when the workers are in power. The possibility envisaged by Marx is that of the *pacific exercise of the dictatorship of the proletariat* and not the replacement of the dictatorship with capitalist social reforms. There was no doubt for Marx and Engels about the necessity of having the proletariat conquer political power. It is left to Bernstein to consider the poultry-yard of bourgeois parliamentarism as the organ by means of which we are to realize the most formidable social transformation of history, *the passage from capitalist society to socialism* .

Bernstein introduces his theory by warning the proletariat against the danger of acquiring power too early. That is, according to Bernstein, the proletariat ought to leave the bourgeois society in its present condition and itself suffer a frightful defeat. If the proletariat came to power, it could draw from Bernstein's theory the following "practical" conclusion: to go to sleep. His theory condemns the proletariat at the most decisive moments of the struggle, to inactivity, to a passive betrayal of its own cause.

Our program would be a miserable scrap of paper if it could not serve us in *all* eventualities, at *all* moments of the struggle and if it did not serve us by its *application* and not by its non-application. If our program contains the formula of the historical development of society from capitalism to socialism, it must also formulate, in all its characteristic fundamentals, all the transitory phases of this development and it should, consequently, be able to indicate to the proletariat what ought to be its corresponding action

at every moment on the road toward socialism. There can be no time for the proletariat when it will be obliged to abandon its program or be abandoned by it.

Practically, this is manifested in the fact that there can be no time when the proletariat, placed in power by the force of events, is not in the condition or is not morally obliged to take certain measures for the realization of its program, that is, take transitory measures in the direction of socialism. Behind the belief that the socialist program can collapse completely at any point of the dictatorship of the proletariat lurks the other belief that the *socialist program is generally and at all times, unrealizable* .

And what if the transitory measures are premature? The question hides a great number of mistaken ideas concerning the real course of a social transformation.

In the first place, the seizure of political power by the proletariat, that is to say by a large popular class, is not produced artificially. It presupposes (with the exception of such cases as the Paris Commune, when the proletariat did not obtain power after a conscious struggle for its goal but fell into its hands like a good thing abandoned by everybody else) a definite degree of maturity of economic and political relations. Here we have the essential difference between *coups d'etat* along Blanqui's conception which are accomplished by an "active minority" and burst out like pistol shot, always inopportunely, and the conquest of political power by a great conscious popular mass which can only be the product of the decomposition of bourgeois society and therefore bears in itself the economic and political legitimization of its opportune appearance.

If, therefore, considered from the angle of political effect the conquest of political power by the working class cannot materialize itself "too early" then from the angle of conservation of power, the premature revolution, the thought of which keeps Bernstein awake, menaces us like a sword of Damocles. Against that neither prayers nor supplication, neither scares nor any amount of anguish, are of any avail. And this for two very simple reasons.

In the first place, it is impossible to imagine that a transformation as formidable as the passage from capitalist society to socialist society can be realized in one happy act. To consider that as possible is, again, to lend color to conceptions that are clearly Blanquist. The socialist transformation supposes a long and stubborn struggle, in the course of which, it is quite probable the proletariat will be repulsed more than once so that for the first time, from the viewpoint of the final outcome of the struggle, it will have necessarily come to power "too early."

In the second place, it will be impossible to avoid the "premature" conquest of State power by the proletariat precisely because these "premature" attacks of the proletariat constitute a factor and indeed a very important factor, creating the political conditions of the final victory. In the course of the political crisis accompanying its seizure of power, in the course of the long and stubborn struggles, the proletariat will acquire the degree of political maturity permitting it to obtain in time a definitive victory of the revolution. Thus these "premature" attacks of the proletariat against the State power are in themselves important historic factors helping to provoke and determine the *point* of the definite victory. Considered from this viewpoint, the idea of a "premature" conquest of political power by the laboring class appears to be a polemic absurdity derived from a mechanical conception of the development of society, and positing for the victory of the class struggle a point fixed *outside* and *independent of* the class struggle.

Since the proletariat is not in the position to seize power in any other way than "prematurely," since the proletariat is absolutely obliged to seize power once or several times "too early" before it can maintain itself in power for good, the objection to the "premature" conquest of power is at bottom nothing more than a *general opposition to the aspiration of the proletariat to possess itself of State power* . Just as all roads lead to Rome, so too do we logically arrive at the conclusion that the revisionist proposal to slight the final aim of the socialist movement is really a recommendation to renounce the socialist movement itself.

Chapter 9: Collapse

Bernstein began his revision of the Social-Democracy by abandoning the theory of capitalist collapse. The latter, however, is the corner-stone of scientific socialism. By rejecting it Bernstein also rejects the whole doctrine of socialism. In the course of his discussion, he abandons one after another of the positions of socialism in order to be able to maintain his first affirmation.

Without the collapse of capitalism, the expropriation of the capitalist class is impossible. Bernstein therefore renounces expropriation and chooses a progressive realization of the "cooperative principle" as the aim of the labor movement.

But cooperation cannot be realized without capitalist production. Bernstein, therefore, renounces the socialization of production and merely proposes to reform commerce and to develop consumers' cooperatives.

But the transformation of society through consumers' cooperatives, even by means of trade unions, is incompatible with the real material development of capitalist society. Therefore, Bernstein abandons the materialist conception of history.

But his conception of the march of economic development is incompatible with the Marxist theory of surplus-value. Therefore, Bernstein abandons the theory of value and surplus-value and, in this way, the whole economic system of Karl Marx.

But the struggle of the proletariat cannot be carried on without a given final aim and without an economic base found in the existing society. Bernstein, therefore, abandons the class struggle and speaks of reconciliation with bourgeois liberalism.

But in a class society, the class struggle is a natural and unavoidable phenomenon. Bernstein, therefore, contests even the existence of classes in society. The working class is for him a mass of individuals, divided politically and intellectually but also economically. And the bourgeoisie, according to him, does not group itself politically in accordance with its inner economic interest but only because of exterior pressure from above and below.

But if there is no economic base for the class struggle and, if consequently, there are no classes in our society, not only the future but even the past struggles of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie appear to be impossible and the Social-Democracy and its successes seem absolutely incomprehensible or they can be understood only as the results of political pressure by the government—that is, not as the natural consequence of historic development but as the fortuitous consequences of the policy of the Hohenzollern not as the legitimate offspring of capitalist society but as the legitimate offspring of capitalist society but as the bastard children of reaction. Rigorously logical, in this respect, Bernstein passes from the materialist conception of history to the outlook of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and the *Vossische Zeitung* .

After rejecting the socialist criticism of capitalist society, it is easy for Bernstein to find the present state of affairs satisfactory—at least in a general way. Bernstein does not hesitate. He discovers that at the present time reaction is not very strong in Germany, that "we cannot speak of political reaction in the countries of western Europe," and that in all the countries of the West "the attitude of the bourgeois classes toward the socialist movement is at most an attitude of defense and not one of oppression," (*Vorwärts* , March 26, 1899). Far from becoming worse, the situation of the workers is getting better. Indeed, the bourgeoisie is politically progressive and morally sane. We cannot speak either of reaction or oppression. It is all for the best in the best of all possible worlds…

Bernstein thus travels in a logical sequence from A to Z. He began by abandoning the *final aim* and supposedly keeping the movement. But as

there can be no socialist movement without a socialist aim he ends by renouncing the *movement* .

And thus, Bernstein's conception of socialism collapses entirely. The proud and admirable symmetric construction of socialist thought becomes for him a pile of rubbish in which the debris of all systems, the pieces of thought of various great and small minds, find a common resting place. Marx and Proudhon, Leon von Buch and Franz Oppenheimer, Friedrich Albert Lange and Kant, Herr Prokopovich and R. Ritter von Neupauer, Herkner, and Schulze-Gävernitz, Lassalle and Professor Julius Wolff: all contribute something to Bernstein’s system. From each he takes a little. There is nothing astonishing about that. For when he abandoned scientific socialism, he lost the axis of intellectual crystallization around which isolated facts group themselves in the organic whole of a coherent conception of the world.

His doctrine, composed of bits of all possible systems, seems upon first consideration to be completely free from prejudices. For Bernstein does not like talk of “party science,” or to be more exact, of class science, any more than he likes to talk of class liberalism or class morality. He thinks he succeeds in expressing human, general, abstract science, abstract liberalism, abstract morality. But since the society of reality is made up of classes which have diametrically opposed interests, aspirations and conceptions, a general human science in social questions, an abstract liberalism, an abstract morality, are at present illusions, pure utopia. The science, the democracy, the morality, considered by Bernstein as general, human, are merely the dominant science, dominant democracy and dominant morality that is, bourgeois science, bourgeois democracy, bourgeois morality.

When Bernstein rejects the economic doctrine of Marx in order to swear by the teachings of Bretano, Böhm-Bawerk, Jevons, Say and Julius Wolff, he exchanges the scientific base of the emancipation of the working class for the apologetics of the bourgeoisie. When he speaks of the generally human character of liberalism and transforms socialism into a variety of liberalism, he deprives the socialist movement (generally) of its class character and consequently of its historic content, consequently of all content; and

conversely, recognizes the class representing liberalism in history, the bourgeoisie, as the champion of the general interests of humanity.

And when he wars against "raising of the material factors to the rank of an all-powerful force of development," when he protests against the so-called "contempt for the ideal" that is supposed to rule the Social-Democracy, when he presumes to talk for idealism, for morals, pronouncing himself at the same time against the only source of the moral rebirth of the proletariat, a revolutionary class struggle—he does no more than the following: preach to the working class the quintessence of the morality of the bourgeoisie, that is, reconciliation with the existing social order and the transfer of the hopes of the proletariat to the limbo of ethical simulacra.

When he directs his keenest arrows against our dialectic system, he is really attacking the specific mode of thought employed by the conscious proletariat in its struggle for liberation. It is an attempt to break the sword that has helped the proletariat to pierce the darkness of its future. It is an attempt to shatter the intellectual arm with the aid of which the proletariat, though materially under the yoke of the bourgeoisie, is yet enabled to triumph over the bourgeoisie. For it is our dialectical system that shows to the working class the transitory nature of this yoke, proving to workers the inevitability of their victory and is already realizing a revolution in the domain of thought. Saying good-bye to our system of dialectics and resorting instead to the intellectual see-saw of the well-known "on the one hand—on the other hand," "yes – but," "although – however," "more – less," etc., he quite logically lapses into a mode of thought that belongs historically to the bourgeoisie in decline, being the faithful intellectual reflection of the social existence and political activity of the bourgeoisie at that stage. The political "on the one hand – on the other hand," "yes – but" of the bourgeoisie today resembles, in a marked degree, Bernstein's manner of thinking which is the sharpest and surest proof of the bourgeois nature of his conception of the world.

But, as it is used by Bernstein, the word "bourgeois" itself is not a class expression but a general social notion. Logical to the end he has exchanged, together with his science, politics, morals and mode of thinking, the historic

language of the proletariat for that of the bourgeoisie. When he uses, without distinction, the term “citizen” in reference to the bourgeois as well as to the proletarian intending, thereby, to refer to man in general, he identifies man in general with the bourgeois and human society with bourgeois society.

Chapter 10: Opportunism and Theory in Practice

Bernstein's book is of great importance to the German and the international labor movement. It is the first attempt to give a theoretic base to the opportunist currents common in the Social-Democracy.

These currents may be said to have existed for a long time in our movement, if we take into consideration such sporadic manifestations of opportunism as the question of subsidization of steamers. But it is only since about 1890, with the suppression of the anti-Socialist laws, that we have had a trend of opportunism of a clearly defined character. Vollmar's "State Socialism," the vote on the Bavarian budget, the "agrarian socialism" of south Germany, Heine's policy of compensation, Schippel's stand on tariffs and militarism, are the high points in the development of our opportunist practice.

What appears to characterize this practice above all? A certain hostility to "theory." This is quite natural, for our "theory," that is, the principles of scientific socialism, impose clearly marked limitations to practical activity —insofar as it concerns the aims of this activity, the means used in attaining these aims and the method employed in this activity. It is quite natural for people who run after immediate "practical" results to want to free themselves from such limitations and to render their practice independent of our "theory."

However, this outlook is refuted by every attempt to apply it in reality. State socialism, agrarian socialism, the policy of compensation, the question of the army, all constituted defeats to our opportunism. It is clear that, if this current is to maintain itself, it must try to destroy the principles of our theory and elaborate a theory of its own. Bernstein's book is precisely an effort in that direction. That is why at Stuttgart all the opportunist elements in our party immediately grouped themselves around Bernstein's banner. If the opportunist currents in the practical activity of our party are an entirely natural phenomenon which can be explained in the light of the special

conditions of our activity and its development, Bernstein's theory is no less natural an attempt to group these currents into a general theoretic expression, an attempt to elaborate its own theoretic conditions and the break with scientific socialism. That is why the published expression of Bernstein's ideas should be recognized as a theoretic test for opportunism and as its first scientific legitimization.

What was the result of this test? We have seen the result. Opportunism is not a position to elaborate a positive theory capable of withstanding criticism. All it can do is to attack various isolated theses of Marxist theory and, just because Marxist doctrine constitutes one solidly constructed edifice, hope by this means to shake the entire system from the top to its foundation.

This shows that opportunist practice is essentially irreconcilable with Marxism. But it also proves that opportunism is incompatible with socialism (the socialist movement) in general, that its internal tendency is to push the labor movement into bourgeois paths, that opportunism tends to completely paralyze the proletarian class struggle. The latter, considered historically, has evidently nothing to do with Marxist doctrine. For, before Marx and independently from him, there have been labor movements and various socialist doctrines, each of which, in its way, was the theoretic expression corresponding to the conditions of the time, of the struggle of the working class for emancipation. The theory that consists in basing socialism on the moral notion of justice, on a struggle against the mode of distribution, instead of basing it on a struggle against the mode of production, the conception of class antagonism as an antagonism between the poor and the rich, the effort to graft the "cooperative principle" on capitalist economy—all the nice notions found in Bernstein's doctrine—already existed before him. And these theories were, *in their time* , in spite of their insufficiency, effective theories of the proletarian class struggle. They were the children's seven-league boots thanks to which the proletariat learned to walk upon the scene of history.

But after the development of the class struggle and its reflex in its social conditions had led to the abandonment of these theories and to the

elaboration of the principles of scientific socialism, there could be no socialism—at least in Germany—outside of Marxist socialism and there could be no socialist class struggle outside of the Social-Democracy. From then on, socialism and Marxism, the proletarian struggle for emancipation and the Social-Democracy, were identical. That is why the return to pre-Marxist socialist theories no longer signifies today a return to the seven-league boots of the childhood of the proletariat, but a return to the puny worn-out slippers of the bourgeoisie.

Bernstein's theory was the *first* , and at the same time, the *last* attempt to give a theoretic base to opportunism. It is the last, because in Bernstein's system, opportunism has gone—negatively through its renunciation of scientific socialism, positively through its marshaling of every bit of theoretic confusion possible—as far as it can. In Bernstein's book, opportunism has crowned its theoretic development (just as it completed its practical development in the position taken by Schippel on the question of militarism), and has reached its ultimate conclusion.

Marxist doctrine can not only refute opportunism theoretically. It alone can explain opportunism as an historic phenomenon in the development of the party. The forward march of the proletariat, on a world historic scale, to its final victory is not, indeed, "so simple a thing." The peculiar character of this movement resides precisely in the fact that here, for the first time in history, the popular masses themselves, *in opposition* to the ruling classes, are to impose their will but they must affect this outside of the present society, beyond the existing society. This *will* the masses can only form in a constant struggle against the existing order. The union of the broad popular masses with an aim reaching beyond the existing social order, the union of the daily struggle with the great world transformation, that is the task of the Social-Democratic movement, which must logically grope on its road of development between the following two rocks: abandoning the mass character of the party or abandoning its final aim falling into bourgeois reformism or into sectarianism, anarchism or opportunism.

In its theoretic arsenal, Marxist doctrine furnished, more than half a century ago, arms that are effective against both of these two extremes. But because

our movement is a mass movement and because the dangers menacing it are not derived from the human brain but from social conditions, Marxist doctrine could not assure us, in advance and once for always, against the anarchist and opportunist tendencies. The latter can be overcome only as we pass from the domain of theory to the domain of practice but only with the help of the arms furnished us by Marx.

"Bourgeois revolutions," wrote Marx a half century ago, "like those of the eighteenth century, rush onward rapidly from success to success, their stage effects outbid one another, men and things seems to be set in flaming brilliants, ecstasy is the prevailing spirit; but they are short-lived, they reach their climax speedily and then society relapses into a long fit of nervous reaction before it learns how to appropriate the fruits of its period of feverish excitement. Proletarian revolutions, on the contrary, such as those of the nineteenth century, criticize themselves constantly; constantly interrupt themselves in their own course; come back to what seems to have been accomplished, in order to start anew; scorn with cruel thoroughness the half-measures, weakness and meanness of their first attempts; seem to throw down their adversary only to enable him to draw fresh strength from the earth and again to rise up against them in more gigantic stature; constantly recoil in fear before the undefined monster magnitude of their own objects—until finally that situation is created which renders all retreats impossible and conditions themselves cry out: 'Hic Rhodus, hic salta!' Here is the rose. And here we must dance!" [*Eighteenth Brumaire*]

This has remained true even after the elaboration of the doctrine of scientific socialism. The proletarian movement has not as yet, all at once, become social-democratic, even in Germany. But it is becoming more social-democratic, surmounting continuously the extreme deviations of anarchism and opportunism, both of which are only determining phases of the development of the Social-Democracy, considered as a process.

For these reasons, we must say that the surprising thing here is not the appearance of an opportunist current but rather its feebleness. As long as it showed itself in isolated cases of the practical activity of the party, one could suppose that it had a serious political base. But now that it has shown

its face in Bernstein's book, one cannot help exclaim with astonishment: "What? Is that all you have to say?" Not the shadow of an original thought! Not a single idea that was not refuted, crushed, reduced into dust by Marxism several decades ago!

It was enough for opportunism to speak out to prove it had nothing to say. In the history of our party that is the only importance of Bernstein's book.

Thus, saying good-bye to the mode of thought of the revolutionary proletariat, to dialectics and to the materialist conception of history, Bernstein can thank them for the attenuating circumstances they provide for his conversion. For only dialectics and the materialist conception of history, magnanimous as they are, could make Bernstein appear as an unconscious predestined instrument, by means of which the rising working class expresses its momentary weakness but which, upon closer inspection, it throws aside contemptuously and with pride.

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[1] *The Pre-Conditions of Socialism and the Tasks for Social Democracy [* English translation *: Evolutionary Socialism]*

[2] The mythological king of Corinth who was condemned to roll a huge stone to the top of a hill. It constantly rolled back down against making his task incessant.

[3] The German revolution of 1848, which struck an effective blow against the feudal institutions in Germany.

Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism

by V. I. Lenin, 1917

Preface to the French and German Edition

I

As was indicated in the preface to the Russian edition, this pamphlet was written in 1916, with an eye to the tsarist censorship. I am unable to revise the whole text at the present time, nor, perhaps, would this be advisable, since the main purpose of the book was, and remains, to present, on the basis of the summarized returns of irrefutable bourgeois statistics, and the admissions of bourgeois scholars of all countries, *a composite picture* of the world capitalist system in its international relationships at the beginning of the twentieth century—on the eve of the first world imperialist war.

To a certain extent it will even be useful for many Communists in advanced capitalist countries to convince themselves by the example of this pamphlet, legal from the standpoint of the tsarist censor, of the possibility, and necessity, of making use of even the slight remnants of legality which still remain at the disposal of the Communists, say, in contemporary America or France, after the recent almost wholesale arrests of Communists, in order to explain the utter falsity of social-pacifist views and hopes for "world democracy". The most essential of what should be added to this censored pamphlet I shall try to present in this preface.

II

It is proved in the pamphlet that the war of 1914-18 was imperialist (that is, an annexationist, predatory, war of plunder) on the part of both sides; it was a war for the division of the world, for the partition and repartition of colonies and spheres of influence of finance capital, etc.

Proof of what was the true social, or rather, the true class character of the war is naturally to be found, not in the diplomatic history of the war, but in an analysis of the *objective* position of the ruling *classes* in *all* the belligerent countries. In order to depict this objective position one must not take examples or isolated data (in view of the extreme complexity of the phenomena of social life it is always possible to select any number of examples or separate data to prove any proposition), but *all* the data on the *basis* of economic life in *all* the belligerent countries and the whole world.

It is precisely irrefutable summarized data of this kind that I quoted in describing the *partition of the world* in 1876 and 1914 (in Chapter VI) and the division of the world's *railways* in 1890 and 1913 (in Chapter VII). Railways are a summation of the basic capitalist industries, coal, iron and steel; a summation and the most striking index of the development of world trade and bourgeois-democratic civilization. How the railways are linked up with large-scale industry, with monopolies, syndicates, cartels, trusts, banks and the financial oligarchy is shown in the preceding chapters of the book. The uneven distribution of the railways, their uneven development—sums up, as it were, modern monopolist capitalism on a world-wide scale. And this summary proves that imperialist wars are absolutely inevitable under *such* an economic system, *as long as* private property in the means of production exists.

The building of railways seems to be a simple, natural, democratic, cultural and civilizing enterprise; that is what it is in the opinion of the bourgeois professors who are paid to depict capitalist slavery in bright colors, and in the opinion of petty-bourgeois philistines. But as a matter of fact the capitalist threads, which in thousands of different intercrossings bind these

enterprises with private property in the means of production in general, have converted this railway construction into an instrument for oppressing *a thousand million* people (in the colonies and semicolonies), that is, more than half the population of the globe that inhabits the dependent countries, as well as the wage-slaves of capital in the "civilized" countries.

Private property based on the labor of the small proprietor, free competition, democracy, all the catchwords with which the capitalists and their press deceive the workers and the peasants are things of the distant past. Capitalism has grown into a world system of colonial oppression and of the financial strangulation of the overwhelming majority of the population of the world by a handful of "advanced" countries. And this "booty" is shared between two or three powerful world plunderers armed to the teeth (America, Great Britain, Japan), who are drawing the whole world into *their* war over the division of *their* booty.

III

The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk dictated by monarchist Germany, and the subsequent much more brutal and despicable Treaty of Versailles dictated by the "democratic" republics of America and France and also by "free" Britain, have rendered a most useful service to humanity by exposing both imperialism's hired coolies of the pen and petty-bourgeois reactionaries who, although they call themselves pacifists and socialists, sang praises to "Wilsonism", and insisted that peace and reforms were possible under imperialism.

The tens of millions of dead and maimed left by the war—a war to decide whether the British or German group of financial plunderers is to receive the most booty—and those two "peace treaties", are with unprecedented rapidity opening the eyes of the millions and tens of millions of people who are downtrodden, oppressed, deceived and duped by the bourgeoisie. Thus, out of the universal ruin caused by the war a world-wide revolutionary crisis is arising which, however prolonged and arduous its stages may be, cannot end otherwise than in a proletarian revolution and in its victory.

The Basle Manifesto of the Second International, which in 1912 gave an appraisal of the very war that broke out in 1914 and not of war in general (there are different kinds of wars, including revolutionary wars)—this Manifesto is now a monument exposing to the full the shameful bankruptcy and treachery of the heroes of the Second International.

That is why I reproduce this Manifesto [1] as a supplement to the present edition, and again and again I urge the reader to note that the heroes of the Second International are as assiduously avoiding the passages of this Manifesto which speak precisely, clearly and definitely of the connection between that impending war and the proletarian revolution, as a thief avoids the scene of his crime.

IV

Special attention has been devoted in this pamphlet to a criticism of Kautskyism, the international ideological trend represented in all countries of the world by the "most prominent theoreticians", the leaders of the Second International (Otto Bauer and Co. in Austria, Ramsay MacDonald and others in Britain, Albert Thomas in France, etc., etc.) and a multitude of socialists, reformists, pacifists, bourgeois democrats and parsons.

This ideological trend is, on the one hand, a product of the disintegration and decay of the Second International, and, on the other hand, the inevitable fruit of the ideology of the petty bourgeoisie, whose entire way of life holds them captive to bourgeois and democratic prejudices.

The views held by Kautsky and his like are a complete renunciation of those same revolutionary principles of Marxism that writer has championed for decades, especially, by the way, in his struggle against socialist opportunism (of Bernstein, Millerand, Hyndman, Gompers, etc.). It is not a mere accident, therefore, that Kautsky's followers all over the world have now united in practical politics with the extreme opportunists (through the Second, or Yellow International) and with the bourgeois governments (through bourgeois coalition governments in which socialists take part).

The growing world proletarian revolutionary movement in general, and the communist movement in particular, cannot dispense with an analysis and exposure of the theoretical errors of Kautskyism. The more so since pacifism and "democracy" in general, which lay no claim to Marxism whatever, but which, like Kautsky and Co., are obscuring the profundity of the contradictions of imperialism and the inevitable revolutionary crisis to which it gives rise, are still very widespread all over the world. To combat these tendencies is the bounden duty of the party of the proletariat, which must win away from the bourgeoisie, the small proprietors who are duped by them and the millions of working people who enjoy more or less petty-bourgeois conditions of life.

V

A few words must be said about Chapter VIII, "Parasitism and Decay of Capitalism". As already pointed out in the text, Hilferding, ex-"Marxist", and now a comrade-in-arms of Kautsky and one of the chief exponents of bourgeois, reformist policy in the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, has taken a step backward on this question compared with the *frankly* pacifist and reformist Englishman, Hobson. The international split of the entire working-class movement is now quite evident (the Second and the Third Internationals). The fact that armed struggle and civil war is now raging between the two trends is also evident—the support given to Kolchak and Denikin in Russia by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries against the Bolsheviks; the fight the Scheidemanns and Noskes have conducted in conjunction with the bourgeoisie against the Spartacists in Germany; the same thing in Finland, Poland, Hungary, etc. What is the economic basis of this world-historical phenomenon?

It is precisely the parasitism and decay of capitalism, characteristic of its highest historical stage of development, i.e., imperialism. As this pamphlet shows, capitalism has now singled out a *handful* (less than one-tenth of the inhabitants of the globe; less than one-fifth at a most "generous" and liberal calculation) of exceptionally rich and powerful states which plunder the whole world simply by "clipping coupons". Capital exports yield an income of eight to ten thousand million francs per annum, at pre-war prices and

according to pre-war bourgeois statistics. Now, of course, they yield much more.

Obviously, out of such enormous *superprofits* (since they are obtained over and above the profits which capitalists squeeze out of the workers of their "own" country) it is *possible to bribe* the labor leaders and the upper stratum of the labor aristocracy. And that is just what the capitalists of the "advanced" countries are doing: they are bribing them in a thousand different ways, direct and indirect, overt and covert.

This stratum of workers-turned-bourgeois, or the labor aristocracy, who are quite philistine in their mode of life, in the size of their earnings and in their entire outlook, is the principal prop of the Second International, and in our days, the principal *social* (not military) *prop of the bourgeoisie* . For they are the real *agents of the bourgeoisie in the working-class* movement, the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class, real vehicles of reformism and chauvinism. In the civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie they inevitably, and in no small numbers. take the side of the bourgeoisie, the "Versaillese" against the "Communards".

Unless the economic roots of this phenomenon are understood and its political and social significance is appreciated, not a step can be taken toward the solution of the practical problem of the communist movement and of the impending social revolution.

Imperialism is the eve of the social revolution of the proletariat. This has been confirmed since 1917 on a world-wide scale.

Lenin
July 6, 1920

During the last fifteen to twenty years, especially since the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902), the economic

and also the political literature of the two hemispheres has more and more often adopted the term "imperialism" in order to describe the present era. In 1902, a book by the English economist J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism,* was published in London and New York. This author, whose point of view is that of bourgeois social-reformism and pacifism which, in essence, is identical with the present point of view of the ex-Marxist, Karl Kautsky, gives a very good and comprehensive description of the principal specific economic and political features of imperialism. In 1910, there appeared in Vienna the work of the Austrian Marxist, Rudolf Hilferding, *Finance Capital* (Russian edition, Moscow, 1912). In spite of the mistake the author makes on the theory of money, and in spite of a certain inclination on his part to reconcile Marxism with opportunism, this work gives a very valuable theoretical analysis of "the latest phase of capitalist development", as the subtitle runs. Indeed, what has been said of imperialism during the last few years, especially in an enormous number of magazine and newspaper articles, and also in the resolutions, for example, of the Chemnitz and Basle congresses which took place in the autumn of 1912, has scarcely gone beyond the ideas expounded, or more exactly, summed up by the two writers mentioned above...

Later on, I shall try to show briefly, and as simply as possible, the connection and relationships between the *principal* economic features of imperialism. I shall not be able to deal with the non-economic aspects of the question, however much they deserve to be dealt with. References to literature and other notes which, perhaps, would not interest all readers, are to be found at the end of this pamphlet.

Chapter 1: Concentration of Production and Monopolies

The enormous growth of industry and the remarkably rapid concentration of production in ever-larger enterprises are one of the most characteristic features of capitalism. Modern production censuses give the most complete and most exact data on this process.

In Germany, for example, out of every 1,000 industrial enterprises, large enterprises, i.e., those employing more than 50 workers, numbered three in 1882, six in 1895 and nine in 1907; and out of every 100 workers employed, this group of enterprises employed. 22, 30 and 37, respectively. Concentration of production, however, is much more intense than the concentration of workers, since labor in the large enterprises is much more productive. This is shown by the figures on steam-engines and electric motors. If we take what in Germany is called industry in the broad sense of the term, that is, including commerce, transport, etc., we get the following picture. Large-scale enterprises, 30,588 out of a total of 3,265,623, that is to say, 0.9 percent. These enterprises employ 5,700,000 workers out of a total of 14,400,000, i.e., 39.4 percent; they use 6,600,000 steam horsepower out of a total of 8,800,000, i.e., 75.3 percent, and 1,200,000 kilowatts of electricity out of a total of 1,500,000, i.e., 77.2 percent.

Less than one-hundredth of the total number of enterprises utilize *more than three-fourths* of the total amount of steam and electric power! Two million nine hundred and seventy thousand small enterprises (employing up to five workers), constituting 91 percent of the total, utilize only 7 percent of the total amount of steam and electric power! Tens of thousands of huge enterprises are everything; millions of small ones are nothing.

In 1907, there were in Germany 586 establishments employing one thousand and more workers, nearly *one-tenth* (1,380,000) of the total number of workers employed in industry, and they consumed *almost one-*

third (32 percent) of the total amount of steam and electric power. [2] As we shall see, money capital and the banks make this superiority of a handful of the largest enterprises still more overwhelming, in the most literal sense of the word, i.e., millions of small, medium and even some big "proprietors" are in fact in complete subjection to some hundreds of millionaire financiers.

In another advanced country of modern capitalism, the United States of America, the growth of the concentration of production is still greater. Here statistics single out industry in the narrow sense of the word and classify enterprises according to the value of their annual output. In 1904 large-scale enterprises with an output valued at one million dollars and over, numbered 1,900 (out of 216,180, i.e., 0.9 percent). These employed 1,400,000 workers (out of 5,500,000, i.e., 25.6 percent) and the value of their output amounted to $5,600,000,000 (out of $14,800,000,000, i.e., 38 percent). Five years later, in 1909, the corresponding figures were: 3,060 enterprises (out of 268,491, i.e., 1.1 percent) employing 2,000,000 workers (out of 6,600,000, i.e., 30.5 percent) with an output valued at $9,000,000,000 (out of $20,700,000,000, i.e., 43.8 percent). [3]

Almost half the total production of all the enterprises of the country was carried on by *one-hundredth part* of these enterprises! These 3,000 giant enterprises embrace 258 branches of industry. From this it can be seen that at a certain stage of its development concentration itself, as it were, leads straight to monopoly, for a score or so of giant enterprises can easily arrive at an agreement, and on the other hand, the hindrance to competition, the tendency towards monopoly, arises from the huge size of the enterprises. This transformation of competition into monopoly is one of the most important—if not the most important—phenomena of modern capitalist economy, and we must deal with it in greater detail. But first we must clear up one possible misunderstanding.

American statistics speak of 3,000 giant enterprises in 250 branches of industry, as if there were only a dozen enterprises of the largest scale for each branch of industry.

But this is not the case. Not in every branch of industry are there large-scale enterprises; and moreover, a very important feature of capitalism in its highest stage of development is so-called *combination* of production, that is to say, the grouping in a single enterprise of different branches of industry, which either represent the consecutive stages in the processing of raw materials (for example, the smelting of iron ore into pig-iron, the conversion of pig-iron into steel, and then, perhaps, the manufacture of steel goods)—or are auxiliary to one another (for example, the utilization of scrap, or of by-products, the manufacture of packing materials, etc.).

"Combination," writes Hilferding, "levels out the fluctuations of trade and therefore assures to the combined enterprises a more stable rate of profit. Secondly, combination has the effect of eliminating trade. Thirdly, it has the effect of rendering possible technical improvements, and, consequently, the acquisition of superprofits over and above those obtained by the 'pure' (i.e,, non-combined) enterprises. Fourthly, it strengthens the position of the combined enterprises relative to the 'pure' enterprises, strengthens them in the competitive struggle in periods of serious depression, when the fall in prices of raw materials does not keep pace with the fall in prices of manufactured goods." [4]

The German bourgeois economist, Heymann, who has written a book especially on "mixed", that is, combined, enterprises in the German iron industry, says: "Pure enterprises perish, they are crushed between the high price of raw material and the low price of the finished product." Thus we get the following picture: "There remain, on the one hand, the big coal companies, producing millions of tons yearly, strongly organized in their coal syndicate, and on the other, the big steel plants, closely allied to the coal mines, having their own steel syndicate. These giant enterprises, producing 400,000 tons of steel per annum, with a tremendous output of ore and coal and producing finished steel goods, employing 10,000 workers quartered in company houses, and sometimes owning their own railways and ports, are the typical representatives of the German iron and steel industry. And concentration goes on further and further. Individual enterprises are becoming larger and larger. An ever-increasing number of enterprises in one, or in several different industries, join together in giant

enterprises, backed up and directed by half a dozen big Berlin banks. In relation to the German mining industry, the truth of the teachings of Karl Marx on concentration is definitely proved; true, this applies to a country where industry is protected by tariffs and freight rates. The German mining industry is ripe for expropriation." [5]

Such is the conclusion which a bourgeois economist who, by way of exception, is conscientious, had to arrive at. It must be noted that he seems to place Germany in a special category because her industries are protected by higher tariffs. But this is a circumstance which only accelerates concentration and the formation of monopolist manufacturers' associations, cartels, syndicates, etc. It is extremely important to note that in free-trade Britain, concentration also leads to monopoly, although somewhat later and perhaps in another form. Professor Hermann Levy, in his special work of research entitled *Monopolies, Cartels and Trusts,* based on data on British economic development, writes as follows:

"In Great Britain it is the size of the enterprise and its high technical level which harbor a monopolist tendency. This, for one thing, is due to the great investment of capital per enterprise, which gives rise to increasing demands for new capital for the new enterprises and thereby renders their launching more difficult. Moreover (and this seems to us to be the more important point), every new enterprise that wants to keep pace with the gigantic enterprises that have been formed by concentration would here produce such an enormous quantity of surplus goods that it could dispose of them only by being able to sell them profitably as a result of an enormous increase in demand; otherwise, this surplus would force prices down to a level that would be unprofitable both for the new enterprise and for the monopoly combines." Britain differs from other countries where protective tariffs facilitate the formation of cartels in that monopolist manufacturers' associations, cartels and trusts arise in the majority of cases only when the number of the chief competing enterprises has been reduced to "a couple of dozen or so". "Here the influence of concentration on the formation of large industrial monopolies in a whole sphere of industry stands out with crystal clarity." [6]

Half a century ago, when Marx was writing *Capital,* free competition appeared to the overwhelming majority of economists to be a "natural law". Official science tried, by a conspiracy of silence, to kill the works of Marx, who by a theoretical and historical analysis of capitalism had proved that free competition gives rise to the concentration of production, which, in turn, at a certain stage of development, leads to monopoly. Today, monopoly has become a fact. Economists are writing mountains of books in which they describe the diverse manifestations of monopoly, and continue to declare in chorus that "Marxism is refuted". But facts are stubborn things, as the English proverb says, and they have to be reckoned with, whether we like it or not. The facts show that differences between capitalist countries, e.g., in the matter of protection or free trade, only give rise to insignificant variations in the form of monopolies or in the moment of their appearance; and that the rise of monopolies, as the result of the concentration of production, is a general and fundamental law of the present stage of development of capitalism.

For Europe, the time when the new capitalism *definitely* superseded the old can be established with fair precision; it was the beginning of the twentieth century. In one of the latest compilations on the history of the "formation of monopolies", we read:

"Isolated examples of capitalist monopoly could be cited from the period preceding 1860; in these could be discerned the embryo of the forms that are so common today; but all this undoubtedly represents the prehistory of the cartels. The real beginning of modern monopoly goes back, at the earliest, to the sixties. The first important period of development of monopoly commenced with the international industrial depression of the seventies and lasted until the beginning of the nineties." "If we examine the question on a European scale, we will find that the development of free competition reached its apex in the sixties and seventies. It was then that Britain completed the construction of her old-style capitalist organization. In Germany, this organization had entered into a fierce struggle with handicraft and domestic industry, and had begun to create for itself its own forms of existence."

“The great revolution commenced with the crash of 1873, or rather, the depression which followed it and which, with hardly discernible interruptions in the early eighties, and the unusually violent, but short-lived boom around about 1889, marks twenty-two years of European economic history ... .. During the short boom of 1889-90, the system of cartels was widely resorted to in order to take advantage of favorable business conditions. An ill-considered policy drove prices up still more rapidly and still higher than would have been the case if there had been no cartels. and nearly all these cartels perished ingloriously in the smash. Another five-year period of bad trade and low prices followed, but a new spirit reigned in industry; the depression was no longer regarded as something to be taken for granted: it was regarded as nothing more than a pause before another boom.

“The cartel movement entered its second epoch: instead of being a transitory phenomenon, the cartels have become one of the foundations of economic life. They are winning one field of industry after another, primarily, the raw materials industry. At the beginning of the nineties the cartel system had already acquired-in the organization of the coke syndicate on the model of which the coal syndicate was later formed—a cartel technique which has hardly been improved on. For the first time the great boom at the close of the nineteenth century and the crisis of 1900-03 occurred entirely—in the mining and iron industries at least—under the aegis of the cartels. And while at that time it appeared to be something novel, now the general public takes it for granted that large spheres of economic life have been, as a general rule, removed from the realm of free competition.” [7]

Thus, the principal stages in the history of monopolies are the following: (1) 1860-70, the highest stage, the apex of development of free competition; monopoly is in the barely discernible, embryonic stage. (2) After the crisis of 1873, a lengthy period of development of cartels; but they are still the exception. They are not yet durable. They are still a transitory phenomenon. (3) The boom at the end of the nineteenth century and the crisis of 1900-03. Cartels become one of the foundations of the whole of economic life. Capitalism has been transformed into imperialism.

Cartels come to an agreement on the terms of sale, dates of payment, etc. They divide the markets among themselves. They fix the quantity of goods to be produced. They fix prices. They divide the profits among the various enterprises, etc.

The number of cartels in Germany was estimated at about 250 in 1896 and at 385 in 1905, with about 12,000 firms participating. [8] But it is generally recognized that these figures are underestimations. From the statistics of German industry for 1907 we quoted above, it is evident that even these 12,000 very big enterprises probably consume more than half the steam and electric power used in the country. In the United States of America, the number of trusts in 1900 was estimated at 185 and in 1907, 250. American statistics divide all industrial enterprises into those belonging to individuals, to private firms or to corporations. The latter in 1904 comprised 23.6 percent, and in 1909, 25.9 percent, i.e., more than one-fourth of the total industrial enterprises in the country. These employed in 1904, 70.6 percent, and in 1909, 75.6 percent, i.e., more than three-fourths of the total wage-earners. Their output at these two dates was valued at $10,900,000,000 and $16,300,000,000, i.e., 73.7 percent and 79.0 percent of the total, respectively.

At times cartels and trusts concentrate in their hands seven- or eight-tenths of the total output of a given branch of industry. The Rhine-Westphalian Coal Syndicate, at its foundation in 1893, concentrated 86.7 percent of the total coal output of the area, and in 1910 it already concentrated 95.4 percent. [9] The monopoly so created assures enormous profits, and leads to the formation of technical production units of formidable magnitude. The famous Standard Oil Company in the United States was founded in 1900: “It has an authorized capital of $150,000,000. It issued $100,000,000 common and $106,000,000 preferred stock. From 1900 to 1907 the following dividends were paid on the latter: 48, 48, 45, 44, 36, 40, 40, 40 percent in the respective years, i.e., in all, $367,000,000. From 1882 to 1907, out of total net profits amounting to $889,000,000, $606,000,000 were distributed in dividends, and the rest went to reserve capital. [10] “In 1907 the various works of the United States Steel Corporation employed no

less than 210,180 people. The largest enterprise in the German mining industry, Gelsenkirchener Bergwerksgesellschaft, in 1908 had a staff of 46,048 workers and office employees." [11] In 1902, the United States Steel Corporation already produced 9,000,000 tons of steel. [12] Its output constituted in 1901, 66.3 percent, and in 1908, 56.1 percent of the total output of steel in the United States. [13] The output of ore was 43.9 percent and 46.3 percent, respectively.

The report of the American Government Commission on Trusts states: "Their superiority over competitors is due to the magnitude of their enterprises and their excellent technical equipment. Since its inception, the Tobacco Trust has devoted all its efforts to the universal substitution of mechanical for manual labor. With this end in view it has bought up all patents that have anything to do with the manufacture of tobacco and has spent enormous sums for this purpose. Many of these patents at first proved to be of no use, and had to be modified by the engineers employed by the trust. At the end of 1906, two subsidiary companies were formed solely to acquire patents. With the same object in view, the trust has built its own foundries, machine shops and repair shops. One of these establishments, that in Brooklyn, employs on the average 300 workers; here experiments are carried out on inventions concerning the manufacture of cigarettes, cheroots, snuff, tinfoil for packing, boxes, etc. Here, also, inventions are perfected." [14] "Other trusts also employ what are called development engineers whose business it is to devise new methods of production and to test technical improvements. The United States Steel Corporation grants big bonuses to its workers and engineers for all inventions that raise technical efficiency, or reduce cost of production." [15]

In German large-scale industry, e.g., in the chemical industry, which has developed so enormously during these last few decades, the promotion of technical improvement is organized in the same way. By 1908 the process of concentration of production had already given rise to two main "groups" which, in their way, were also in the nature of monopolies. At first these groups constituted "dual alliances" of two pairs of big factories, each having a capital of from twenty to twenty-one million marks-on the one hand, the former Meister Factory in Hochst and the Casella Factory in

Frankfurt am Main; and on the other hand, the aniline and soda factory at Ludwigshafen and the former Bayer Factory at Elberfeld. Then, in 1905, one of these groups, and in 1908 the other group, each concluded an agreement with yet another big factory. The result was the formation of two "triple alliances", each with a capital of from forty to fifty million marks. And these "alliances" have already begun to "approach" each other, to reach "an understanding" about prices, etc. [16]

Competition becomes transformed into monopoly. The result is immense progress in the socialization of production. In particular, the process of technical invention and improvement becomes socialized.

This is something quite different from the old free competition between manufacturers, scattered and out of touch with one another, and producing for an unknown market. Concentration has reached the point at which it is possible to make an approximate estimate of all sources of raw materials (for example, the iron ore deposits) of a country and even, as we shall see, of several countries, or of the whole world. Not only are such estimates made, but these sources are captured by gigantic monopolist associations. An approximate estimate of the capacity of markets is also made, and the associations "divide" them up amongst themselves by agreement. Skilled labor is monopolized, the best engineers are engaged; the means of transport are captured—railways in America, shipping companies in Europe and America. Capitalism in its imperialist stage leads directly to the most comprehensive socialization of production; it, so to speak, drags the capitalists, against their will and consciousness, into some sort of a new social order, a transitional one from complete free competition to complete socialization.

Production becomes social, but appropriation remains private. The social means of production remain the private property of a few. The general framework of formally recognized free competition remains, and the yoke of a few monopolists on the rest of the population becomes a hundred times heavier, more burdensome and intolerable.

The German economist, Kestner, has written a book especially devoted to "the struggle between the cartels and outsiders", i.e., the capitalists outside the cartels. He entitled his work *Compulsory Organisation* , although, in order to present capitalism in its true light, he should, of course, have written about compulsory submission to monopolist associations. It is instructive to glance at least at the list of the methods the monopolist associations resort to in the present-day, the latest, the civilized struggle for "organization": (1) stopping supplies of raw materials ... "one of the most important methods of compelling adherence to the cartel"); (2) stopping the supply of labor by means of "alliances" (i.e., of agreements between the capitalists and the trade unions by which the latter permit their members to work only in cartelized enterprises); (3) stopping deliveries; (4) closing trade outlets; (5) agreements with the buyers, by which the latter undertake to trade only with the cartels; (6) systematic price cutting (to ruin "outside" firms, i.e., those which refuse to submit to the monopolists. Millions are spent in order to sell goods for a certain time below their cost price; there were instances when the price of petrol was thus reduced from 40 to 22 marks, i.e., almost by half!); (7) stopping credits; (8) boycott.

Here we no longer have competition between small and large, between technically developed and backward enterprises. We see here the monopolists throttling those who do not submit to them, to their yoke, to their dictation. This is how this process is reflected in the mind of a bourgeois economist:

"Even in the purely economic sphere," writes Kestner, "a certain change is taking place from commercial activity in the old sense of the word towards organizational-speculative activity. The greatest success no longer goes to the merchant whose technical and commercial experience enables him best of all to estimate the needs of the buyer, and who is able to discover and, so to speak, 'awaken' a latent demand; it goes to the speculative genius [?!] who knows how to estimate, or even only to sense in advance, the organizational development and the possibilities of certain connections between individual enterprises and the banks. . . ."

Translated into ordinary human language this means that the development of capitalism has arrived at a stage when, although commodity production still "reigns" and continues to be regarded as the basis of economic life, it has in reality been undermined and the bulk of the profits go to the "geniuses" of financial manipulation. At the basis of these manipulations and swindles lies socialized production; but the immense progress of mankind, which achieved this socialization, goes to benefit . . . the speculators. We shall see later how "on these grounds" reactionary, petty-bourgeois critics of capitalist imperialism dream of going *back* to "free", "peaceful", and "honest" competition.

"The prolonged raising of prices which results from the formation of cartels," says Kestner, "has hitherto been observed only in respect of the most important means of production, particularly coal, iron and potassium, but never in respect of manufactured goods. Similarly, the increase in profits resulting from this raising of prices has been limited only to the industries which produce means of production. To this observation we must add that the industries which process raw materials (and not semi-manufactures) not only secure advantages from the cartel formation in the shape of high profits, to the detriment of the finished goods industry, but have also secured a *dominating position* over the latter, which did not exist under free competition." [17]

The words which I have italicized reveal the essence of the case which the bourgeois economists admit so reluctantly and so rarely, and which the present-day defenders of opportunism, led by Kautsky, so zealously try to evade and brush aside. Domination, and the violence that is associated with it, such are the relationships that are typical of the "latest phase of capitalist development"; this is what inevitably had to result, and has resulted, from the formation of all-powerful economic monopolies.

I shall give one more example of the methods employed by the cartels. Where it is possible to capture all or the chief sources of raw materials, the rise of cartels and formation of monopolies is particularly easy. It would be wrong, however, to assume that monopolies do not arise in other industries

in which it is impossible to corner the sources of raw materials. The cement industry, for instance, can find its raw materials everywhere. Yet in Germany this industry too is strongly cartelized. The cement manufacturers have formed regional syndicates: South German, Rhine-Westplialian, etc. The prices fixed are monopoly prices: 230 to 280 marks a car-load, when the cost price is 180 marks! The enterprises pay a dividend of from 12 to 16 percent—and it must not be forgotten that the "geniuses" of modern speculation know how to pocket big profits besides what they draw in dividends. In order to prevent competition in such a profitable industry, the monopolists even resort to various stratagems: they spread false rumors about the bad situation in their industry; anonymous warnings are published in the newspapers, like the following: "Capitalists, don't invest your capital in the cement industry!"; lastly, they buy up "outsiders" (those outside the syndicates) and pay them compensation of 60,000, 80,000 and even 150,000 marks. [18] Monopoly hews a path for itself everywhere without scruple as to the means, from paying a "modest" sum to buy off competitors, to the American device of employing dynamite against them.

The statement that cartels can abolish crises is a fable spread by bourgeois economists who at all costs desire to place capitalism in a favorable light. On the contrary, the monopoly created in *certain* branches of industry increases and intensifies the anarchy inherent in capitalist production *as a whole.* The disparity between the development of agriculture and that of industry, which is characteristic of capitalism in general, is increased. The privileged position of the most highly cartelized, so-called *heavy* industry, especially coal and iron, causes "a still greater lack of coordination" in other branches of industry—as Jeidels, the author of one of the best works on "the relationship of the German big banks to industry", admits. [19]

"The more developed an economic system is," writes Liefmann, an unblushing apologist of capitalism, "the more it resorts to risky enterprises, or enterprises in other countries, to those which need a great deal of time to develop, or finally, to those which are only of local importance." [20] The increased risk is connected in the long run with a prodigious increase of capital, which, as it were, overflows the brim, flows abroad, etc. At the same time the extremely rapid rate of technical progress gives rise to

increasing elements of disparity between the various spheres of national economy, to anarchy and crises. Liefmann is obliged to admit that: “In all probability mankind will see further important technical revolutions in the near future which will also affect the organization of the economic system”... electricity and aviation.... “As a general rule, in such periods of radical economic change, speculation develops on a large scale.”... [21]

Crises of every kind—economic crises most frequently, but not only these—in their turn increase very considerably the tendency towards concentration and towards monopoly. In this connection, the following reflections of Jeidels on the significance of the crisis of 1900, which, as we have already seen, marked the turning-point in the history of modern monopoly, are exceedingly instructive:

“Side by side with the gigantic plants in the basic industries, the crisis of 1900 still found many plants organized on lines that today would be considered obsolete, the ‘pure’ (non-combined) plants, which were brought into being at the height of the industrial boom. The fall in prices and the falling off in demand put these ‘pure’ enterprises in a precarious position, which did not affect the gigantic combined enterprises at all or only affected them for a very short time. As a consequence of this the crisis of 1900 resulted in a far greater concentration of industry than the crisis of 1873: the latter crisis also produced a sort of selection of the best-equipped enterprises, but owing to the level of technical development at that time, this selection could not place the firms which successfully emerged from the crisis in a position of monopoly. Such a durable monopoly exists to a high degree in the gigantic enterprises in the modern iron and steel and electrical industries owing to their very complicated technique, far-reaching organization and magnitude of capital, and, to a lesser degree, in the engineering industry, certain branches of the metallurgical industry, transport, etc.” [22]

Monopoly! This is the last word in the “latest phase of capitalist development”. But we shall only have a very insufficient, incomplete, and poor notion of the real power and the significance of modern monopolies if we do not take into consideration the part played by the banks.

Chapter 2: Banks and Their New Role

The principal and primary function of banks is to serve as middlemen in the making of payments. In so doing they transform inactive money capital into active, that is, into capital yielding a profit; they collect all kinds of money revenues and place them at the disposal of the capitalist class.

As banking develops and becomes concentrated in a small number of establishments, the banks grow from modest middlemen into powerful monopolies having at their command almost the whole of the money capital of all the capitalists and small businessmen and also the larger part of the means of production and sources of raw materials in any one country and in a number of countries. This transformation of numerous modest middlemen into a handful of monopolists is one of the fundamental processes in the growth of capitalism into capitalist imperialism; for this reason we must first of all examine the concentration of banking.

In 1907-08, the combined deposits of the German joint-stock banks, each having a capital of more than a million marks, amounted to 7,000 million marks; in 1912-13, these deposits already amounted to 9,800 million marks, an increase of 40 percent in five years; and of the 2,800 million increase, 2,750 million was divided among 57 banks, each having a capital of more than 10 million marks. The distribution of the deposits between big and small banks was as follows: [23]

Percentage of Total Deposits

	Big Berlin Banks	Capital equal to or greater than 10 mil marks	Capital of 1-10 million marks	Capital less than 1 million marks
# of Banks	9	48	115	N/A
1907-1908	47	33	17	4
1912-1913	49	36	12	3

The small banks are being squeezed out by the big banks, of which only nine concentrate in their hands almost half the total deposits. But we have left out many important details, for instance, the transformation of

numerous small banks into actual branches of the big banks, etc. Of this I shall speak later on.

At the end of 1913, Schulze-Gaevernitz estimated the deposits in the nine big Berlin banks at 5,100 million marks, out of a total of about 10,000 million marks. Taking into account not only the deposits, but the total bank capital, this author wrote: "At the end of 1909, the nine big Berlin banks, *together with their affiliated banks* , controlled 11,300 million marks, that is, about 83 percent of the total German bank capital. The Deutsche Bank, which *together with its affiliated banks* controls nearly 3,000 million marks, represents, parallel to the Prussian State Railway Administration, the biggest and also the most decentralized accumulation of capital in the Old World." [24]

I have emphasized the reference to the "affiliated" banks because it is one of the most important distinguishing features of modern capitalist concentration. The big enterprises, and the banks in particular, not only completely absorb the small ones, but also "annex" them, subordinate them, bring them into their "own" group or "concern" (to use the technical term) by acquiring "holdings" in their capital, by purchasing or exchanging shares, by a system of credits, etc., etc. Professor Liefmann has written a voluminous "work" of about 500 pages describing modern "holding and finance companies", [25] unfortunately adding very dubious "theoretical" reflections to what is frequently undigested raw material. To what results this "holding" system leads in respect of concentration is best illustrated in the book written on the big German banks by Riesser, himself a banker. But before examining his data, let us quote a concrete example of the "holding" system.

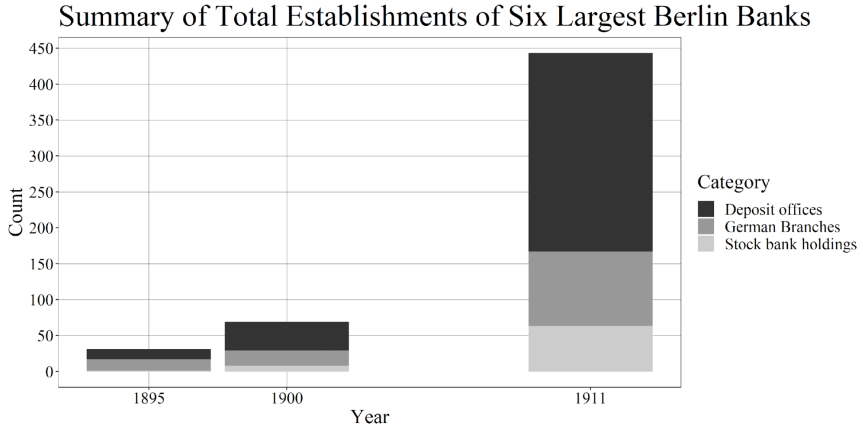
The Deutsche Bank "group" is one of the biggest, if not the biggest, of the big banking groups. In order to trace the main threads which connect all the banks in this group, a distinction must be made between holdings of the first and second and third degree, or what amounts to the same thing, between dependence (of the lesser banks on the Deutsche Bank) in the first, second and third degree. We then obtain the following picture [26] :

The Deutsche Bank has holdings:	Direct or 1st degree dependence	2nd degree dependence	3rd degree dependence
Permanently	in 17 other banks	9 of 17 hold 34 other banks	4 of 9 hold 7 other banks
Indefinitely	in 5 other banks	-	-
Occasionally	in 8 other banks	5 of 8 hold 14 other banks	2 of 5 hold 2 other banks
Totals	in 30 other banks	14 of 30 hold 48 other banks	6 of 14 hold 9 other banks

Included in the eight banks "occasionally" dependent on the Deutsche Bank in the "first degree", are three foreign banks: one Austrian (the Wiener Bankverein) and two Russian (the Siberian Commercial Bank and the Russian Bank for Foreign Trade). Altogether, the Deutsche Bank group comprises, directly and indirectly, partially and totally, 87 banks; and the total capital—its own and that of others which it controls—is estimated at between two and three thousand million marks.

It is obvious that a bank which stands at the head of such a group, and which enters into agreement with half a dozen other banks only slightly smaller than itself for the purpose of conducting exceptionally big and profitable financial operations like floating state loans, has already outgrown the part of "middleman" and has become an association of a handful of monopolists.

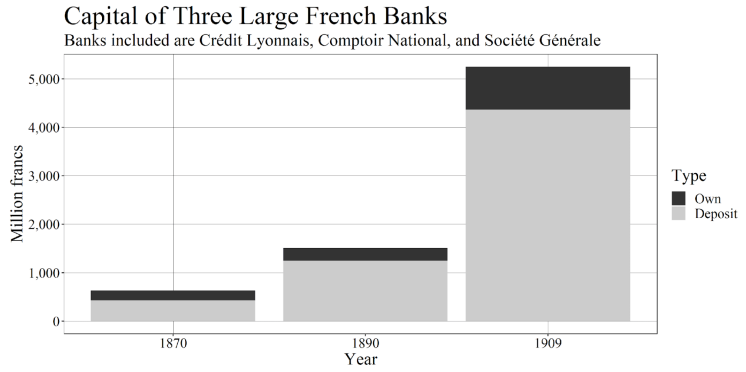
The rapidity with which the concentration of banking proceeded in Germany at the turn of the twentieth century is shown by the following data which we quote in an abbreviated form from Riesser:

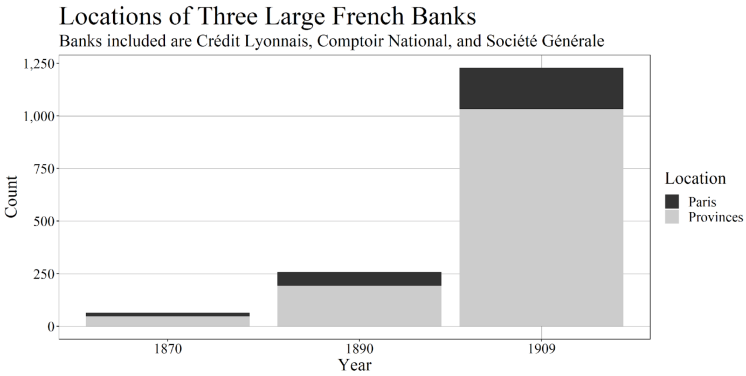


We see the rapid expansion of a close network of channels which cover the whole country, centralizing all capital and all revenues, transforming thousands and thousands of scattered economic enterprises into a single national capitalist, and then into a world capitalist economy. The "decentralization" that Schulze-Gaevernitz, as an exponent of present-day bourgeois political economy, speaks of in the passage previously quoted, really means the subordination to a single center of an increasing number of formerly relatively "independent", or rather, strictly local economic units. In reality it is *centralization* , the enhancement of the role, importance and power of monopolist giants.

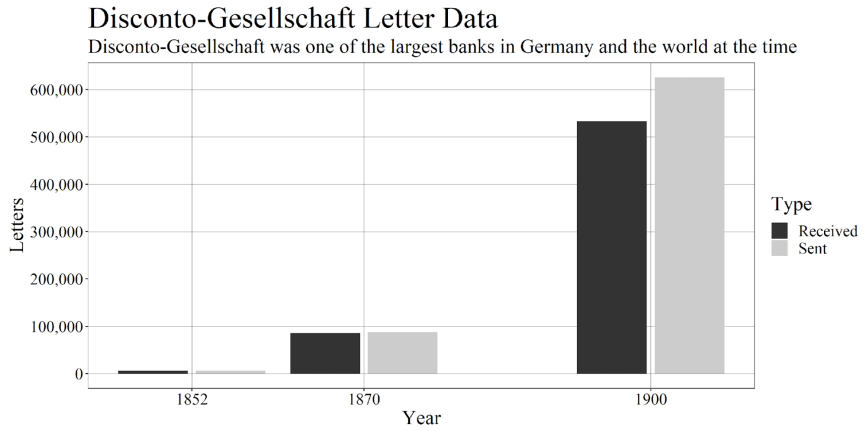
In the older capitalist countries this "banking network" is still more close. In Great Britain and Ireland, in 1910, there were in all 7,151 branches of banks. Four big banks had more than 400 branches each (from 447 to 689); four had more than 200 branches each, and eleven more than 100 each.

In France, *three* very big banks, Crédit Lyonnais, the Comptoir National and the Société Générale extended their operations and their network of branches in the following manner. [27]





In order to show the "connections" of a big modern bank, Riesser gives the following figures of the number of letters dispatched and received by the Disconto-Gesellschaft, one of the biggest banks in Germany and in the world (its capital in 1914 amounted to 300 million marks):



The number of accounts of the big Paris bank, the Crédit Lyonnais, increased from 28,535 in 1875 to 633,539 in 1912. [28]

These simple figures show perhaps better than lengthy disquisitions how the concentration of capital and the growth of bank turnover are radically changing the significance of the banks. Scattered capitalists are transformed into a single collective capitalist. When carrying the current accounts of a few capitalists, a bank, as it were, transacts a purely technical and exclusively auxiliary operation. When, however, this operation grows to enormous dimensions we find that a handful of monopolists subordinate to their will all the operations, both commercial and industrial, of the whole of capitalist society; for they are enabled-by means of their banking connections, their current accounts and other financial operations—first, to *ascertain exactly* the financial position of the various capitalists, then to *control* them, to influence them by restricting or enlarging, facilitating or hindering credits, and finally to *entirely determine* their fate, determine their income, deprive them of capital, or permit them to increase their capital rapidly and to enormous dimensions, etc.

We have just mentioned the 300 million marks capital of the Disconto-Gesellschaft of Berlin. This increase of the capital of the bank was one of the incidents in the struggle for hegemony between two of the biggest Berlin banks-the Deutsche Bank and the Disconto. In 1870, the first was still a novice and had a capital of only 15 million marks, while the second had a capital of 30 million marks. In 1908, the first had a capital of 200 million, while the second had 170 million. In 1914, the first increased its capital to 250 million and the second, by merging with another first-class big bank, the Schaaffhausenscher Bankverein, increased its capital to 300 million. And, of course, this struggle for hegemony went hand in hand with the more and more frequent conclusion of “agreements” of an increasingly durable character between the two banks. The following are the conclusions that this development forces upon banking specialists who regard economic questions from a standpoint which does not in the least exceed the bounds of the most moderate and cautious bourgeois reformism.

Commenting on the increase of the capital of the Disconto Gesellschaft to 300 million marks, the German review, *Die Bank* , wrote: “Other banks will follow this same path and in time the three hundred men, who today govern Germany economically, will gradually be reduced to fifty, twenty-five or still fewer. It cannot be expected that this latest move towards concentration will be confined to banking. The close relations that exist between individual banks naturally lead to the bringing together of the industrial syndicates which these banks favor.... One fine morning we shall wake up in surprise to see nothing but trusts before our eyes, and to find ourselves faced with the necessity of substituting state monopolies for private monopolies. However, we have nothing to reproach ourselves with, except that we have allowed things to follow their own course, slightly accelerated by the manipulation of stocks.” [29]

This is an example of the impotence of bourgeois journalism which differs from bourgeois science only in that the latter is less sincere and strives to obscure the essence of the matter, to hide the forest behind the trees. To be “surprised” at the results of concentration, to “reproach” the government of capitalist Germany, or capitalist “society” (“ourselves”), to fear that the introduction of stocks and shares might “accelerate” concentration in the same way as the German “cartel” specialist Tschierschky fears the American trusts and “prefers” the German cartels on the grounds that they “may not, like the trusts, excessively accelerate technical and economic progress” [30] —is not all this a sign of impotence?

But facts remain facts. There are no trusts in Germany; there are “only” cartels—but Germany is *governed* by not more than three hundred magnates of capital, and the number of these is constantly diminishing. At all events, banks greatly intensify and accelerate the process of concentration of capital and the formation of monopolies in all capitalist countries, notwithstanding all the differences in their banking laws.

The banking system “possesses, indeed, the form of universal book-keeping and distribution of means of production on a social scale, but solely the form”, wrote Marx in *Capital* half a century ago (Russ. trans., Vol. III, part

II, p. 144). The figures we have quoted on the growth of bank capital, on the increase in the number of the branches and offices of the biggest banks, the increase in the number of their accounts, etc., present a concrete picture of this "universal book-keeping" of the *whole* capitalist class; and not only of the capitalists, for the banks collect, even though temporarily, all kinds of money revenues—of small businessmen, office clerks, and of a tiny upper stratum of the working class. "Universal distribution of means of production"—that, from the formal aspect, is what grows out of the modern banks, which, numbering some three to six of the biggest in France, and six to eight in Germany, control millions and millions. In *substance* , however, the distribution of means of production is not at all "universal", but private, i.e., it conforms to the interests of big capital, and primarily, of huge, monopoly capital, which operates under conditions in which the masses live in want, in which the whole development of agriculture hopelessly lags behind the development of industry, while within industry itself the "heavy industries" exact tribute from all other branches of industry.

In the matter of socializing capitalist economy the savings-banks and post-offices are beginning to compete with the banks; they are more "decentralized", i.e., their influence extends to a greater number of localities, to more remote places, to wider sections of the population. Here is the data collected by an American commission on the comparative growth of deposits in banks and savings-banks [31] :

Deposits in billion marks

	Britain		France		Germany		
Year	Banks	Savings-banks	Banks	Savings-banks	Banks	Credit Societies	Savings-banks
1880	8.4	1.6	N/A	0.9	0.5	0.4	2.6
1888	12.4	2.0	1.5	2.1	1.1	0.4	4.5
1908	23.2	4.2	3.7	4.2	7.1	2.2	13.9

As they pay interest at the rate of 4 percent and 4.25 percent on deposits, the savings-banks must seek "profitable" investments for their capital, they must deal in bills, mortgages, etc.The boundaries between the banks and the savings-banks "become more and more obliterated". The Chambers of Commerce of Bochum and Erfurt, for example, demand that savings-banks

be “prohibited” from engaging in “purely” banking business,such as discounting bills; they demand the limitation of the “banking” operations of the post-office. [32] The banking magnates seem to be afraid that state monopoly will steal upon them. from an unexpected quarter. It goes without saying, however, that this fear is no more than an expression of the rivalry, so to speak, between two department managers in the same office; for, on the one hand, the millions entrusted to the savings-banks are in the final analysis actually controlled by *these very same* bank capital magnates, while, on the other hand, state monopoly in capitalist society is merely a means of increasing and guaranteeing the income of millionaires in some branch of industry who are on the verge of bankruptcy.

The change from the old type of capitalism, in which free competition predominated, to the new capitalism, in which monopoly reigns, is expressed, among other things, by a decline in the importance of the Stock Exchange. The review, *Die Bank* , writes: “The Stock Exchange has long ceased to be the indispensable medium of circulation that it formerly was when the banks were not yet able to place the bulk of new issues with their clients.” [33]

“’Every bank is a Stock Exchange’, and the bigger the bank, and the more successful the concentration of banking, the truer does this modern aphorism ring.” [34] “While formerly, in the seventies, the Stock Exchange, flushed with the exuberance of youth” (a “subtle” allusion to the Stock Exchange crash of 1873, the company promotion scandals, etc.), “opened the era of the industrialization of Germany, nowadays the banks and industry are able to ‘manage it alone’. The domination of our big banks over the Stock Exchange ... is nothing else than the expression of the completely organized German industrial state. If the domain of the automatically functioning economic laws is thus restricted, and if the domain of conscious regulation by the banks is considerably enlarged, the national economic responsibility of a few guiding heads is immensely increased,” so writes the German Professor Schulze-Gaevernitz, [35] an apologist of German imperialism, who is regarded as an authority by the imperialists of all countries, and who tries to gloss over the “mere detail” that the “conscious regulation” of economic life by the banks consists in the

fleecing of the public by a handful of "completely organized" monopolists. The task of a bourgeois professor is not to lay bare the entire mechanism, or to expose all the machinations of the bank monopolists, but rather to present them in a favorable light.

In the same way, Riesser, a still more authoritative economist and himself a banker, makes shift with meaningless phrases in order to explain away undeniable facts: "... the Stock Exchange is steadily losing the feature which is absolutely essential for national economy as a whole and for the circulation of securities in particular—that of being not only a most exact measuring-rod, but also an almost automatic regulator of the economic movements which converge on it." [36]

In other words, the old capitalism, the capitalism of free competition with its indispensable regulator, the Stock Exchange, is passing away. A new capitalism has come to take its place, bearing obvious features of something transient, a mixture of free competition and monopoly. The question naturally arises: into what is this new capitalism "developing"? But the bourgeois scholars are afraid to raise this question.

"Thirty years ago, businessmen, freely competing against one another, performed nine-tenths of the work connected with their business other than manual labor. At the present time, nine tenths of this 'brain work' is performed by *employees* . Banking is at the forefront of this evolution." [37]
This admission by Schulze-Gaevernitz brings us once again to the question: into what is this new capitalism, capitalism in its imperialist stage, developing?

Among the few banks which remain at the head of all capitalist economy as a result of the process of concentration, there is naturally to be observed an increasingly marked tendency towards monopolist agreements, towards a *bank trust* . In America, not nine, but *two* very big banks, those of the multimillionaires Rockefeller and Morgan, control a capital of eleven thousand million marks. [38] In Germany the absorption of the Schaaffhausenscher Bankverein by the Disconto-Gesellschaft to which I

referred above, was commented on in the following terms by the *Frankfurter Zeitung* , an organ of Stock Exchange interests:

"The concentration movement of the banks is narrowing the circle of establishments from which it is possible to obtain credits, and is consequently increasing the dependence of big industry upon a small number of banking groups. In view of the close connection between industry and the financial world, the freedom of movement of industrial companies which need banking capital is restricted. For this reason, big industry is watching the growing trustification of the banks with mixed feelings. Indeed, we have repeatedly seen the beginnings of certain agreements between the individual big banking concerns, which aim at restricting competition." [39]

Again and again, the final word in the development of banking is monopoly.

As regards the close connection between the banks and industry, it is precisely in this sphere that the new role of the banks is, perhaps, most strikingly felt. When a bank discounts a bill for a firm, opens a current account for it, etc., these operations, taken separately, do not in the least diminish its independence, and the bank plays no other part than that of a modest middleman. But when such operations are multiplied and become an established practice, when the bank "collects" in its own hands enormous amounts of capital, when the running of a current account for a given firm enables the bank—and this is what happens—to obtain fuller and more detailed information about the economic position of its client, the result is that the industrial capitalist becomes more completely dependent on the bank.

At the same time a personal link-up, so to speak, is established between the banks and the biggest industrial and commercial enterprises, the merging of one with another through the acquisition of shares, through the appointment of bank directors to the Supervisory Boards (or Boards of Directors) of industrial and commercial enterprises, and vice versa. The German economist, Jeidels, has compiled detailed data on this form of concentration

of capital and of enterprises. Six of the biggest Berlin banks were represented by their directors in 344 industrial companies; and by their board members in 407 others, making a total of 751 companies. In 289 of these companies they either had two of their representatives on each of the respective Supervisory Boards, or held the posts of chairmen. We find these industrial and commercial companies in the most diverse branches of industry: insurance, transport, restaurants, theaters, art industry, etc. On the other hand, on the Supervisory Boards of these six banks (in 1910) were fifty-one of the biggest industrialists, including the director of Krupp, of the powerful "Hapag" (Hamburg-Amerika Line), etc., etc. From 1895 to 1910, each of these six banks participated in the share and bond issues of many hundreds of industrial companies (the number ranging from 281 to 419). [40]

The "personal link-up" between the banks and industry is supplemented by the "personal link-up" between both of them and the government. "Seats on Supervisory Boards," writes Jeidels, "are freely offered to persons of title, also to ex-civil servants, who are able to do a great deal to facilitate (!!) relations with the authorities." . . . "Usually, on the Supervisory Board of a big bank, there is a member of parliament or a Berlin city councilor."

The building and development, so to speak, of the big capitalist monopolies is therefore going on full steam ahead in all "natural" and "supernatural" ways. A sort of division of labor is being systematically developed amongst the several hundred kings of finance who reign over modern capitalist society:

"Simultaneously with this widening of the sphere of activity of certain big industrialists (joining the boards of banks, etc.) and with the assignment of provincial bank managers to definite industrial regions, there is a growth of specialization among the directors of the big banks. Generally speaking, this specialization is only conceivable when banking is conducted on a large scale, and particularly when it has widespread connections with industry. This division of labor proceeds along two lines: on the one hand, relations with industry as a whole are entrusted to one director, as his special function; on the other, each director assumes the supervision of several separate enterprises, or of a group of enterprises in the same branch of

industry or having similar interests.... (Capitalism has already reached the stage of organized supervision of individual enterprises.) One specializes in German industry, sometimes even in West German industry alone (the West is the most industrialized part of Germany), others specialize in relations with foreign states and foreign industry, in information on the characters of industrialists and others, in Stock Exchange questions, etc. Besides, each bank director is often assigned a special locality or a special branch of industry; one works chiefly on Supervisory Boards of electric companies, another, on chemical, brewing, or beet sugar plants, a third, in a few isolated industrial enterprises, but at the same time works on the Supervisory Boards of insurance companies.... In short, there can be no doubt that the growth in the dimensions and diversity of the big banks' operations is accompanied by an increase in the division of labor among their directors with the object (and result) of, so to speak, lifting them somewhat out of pure banking and making them better experts, better judges of the general problems of industry and the special problems of each branch of industry, thus making them more capable of acting within the respective bank's industrial sphere of influence. This system is supplemented by the banks' endeavors to elect to their Supervisory Boards men who are experts in industrial affairs, such as industrialists, former officials, especially those formerly in the railway service or in mining," etc. [41]

We find the same system only in a slightly different form in French banking. For instance, one of the three biggest French banks, the Crédit Lyonnais, has organized a financial research service (*service des études financières*), which permanently employs over fifty engineers, statisticians, economists, lawyers, etc. This costs from six to seven hundred thousand francs annually. The service is in turn divided into eight departments: one specializes in collecting information on industrial establishments, another studies general statistics, a third, railway and steamship companies, a fourth, securities, a fifth, financial reports, etc. [42]

The result is, on the one hand, the ever-growing merger, or, as N. I. Bukharin aptly calls it, coalescence, of bank and industrial capital and, on the other hand, the growth of the banks into institutions of a truly "universal

character". On this question I find it necessary to quote the exact terms used by Jeidels, who has best studied the subject:

"An examination of the sum total of industrial relationships reveals the universal *character* of the financial establishments working on behalf of industry. Unlike other kinds of banks, and contrary to the demand sometimes expressed in the literature that banks should specialize in one kind of business or in one branch of industry in order to prevent the ground from slipping from under their feet—the big banks are striving to make their connections with industrial enterprises as varied as possible in respect of the locality or branches of industry and are striving to eliminate the unevenness in the distribution of capital among localities and branches of industry resulting from the historical development of individual enterprises." "One tendency is to make the connections with industry general; another tendency is to make them durable and close. In the six big banks both these tendencies are realized, not in full, but to a considerable extent and to an equal degree."

Quite often industrial and commercial circles complain of the "terrorism" of the banks. And it is not surprising that such complaints are heard, for the big banks "command", as will be seen from the following example. On November 19, 1901, one of the big, so-called Berlin "D" banks (the names of the four biggest banks begin with the letter D) wrote to the Board of Directors of the German Central Northwest Cement Syndicate in the following terms: "As we learn from the notice you published in a certain newspaper of the 18th inst., we must reckon with the possibility that the next general meeting of your syndicate, to be held on the 30th of this month, may decide on measures which are likely to affect changes in your enterprise which are unacceptable to us. We deeply regret that, for these reasons, we are obliged henceforth to withdraw the credit which had hitherto been allowed to you.... But if the said next general meeting does not decide upon measures which are unacceptable to us, and if we receive suitable guarantees on this matter for the future, we shall be quite willing to open negotiations with you on the grant of a new credit." [43]

As a matter of fact, this is small capital's old complaint about being oppressed by big capital, but in this case it was a whole syndicate that fell into the category of "small" capital! The old struggle between small and big capital is being resumed at a new and immeasurably higher stage of development. It stands to reason that the big banks' enterprises, worth many millions, can accelerate technical progress with means that cannot possibly be compared with those of the past. The banks, for example, set up special technical research societies, and, of course, only "friendly" industrial enterprises benefit from their work. To this category belong the Electric Railway Research Association, the Central Bureau of Scientific and Technical Research, etc.

The directors of the big banks themselves cannot fail to see that new conditions of national economy are being created; but they are powerless in the face of these phenomena.

"Anyone who has watched, in recent years," writes Jeidels, "the changes of incumbents of directorships and seats on the Supervisory Boards of the big banks, cannot fail to have noticed that power is gradually passing into the hands of men who consider the active intervention of the big banks in the general development of industry to be necessary and of increasing importance. Between these new men and the old bank directors, disagreements on this subject of a business and often of a personal nature are growing. The issue is whether or not the banks, as credit institutions, will suffer from this intervention in industry, whether they are sacrificing tried principles and an assured profit to engage in a field of activity which has nothing in common with their role as middlemen in providing credit, and which is leading the banks into a field where they are more than ever before exposed to the blind forces of trade fluctuations. This is the opinion of many of the older bank directors, while most of the young men consider active intervention in industry to be a necessity as great as that which gave rise, simultaneously with big modern industry, to the big banks and modern industrial banking. The two parties are agreed only on one point: that there are neither firm principles nor a concrete aim in the new activities of the big banks." [44]

The old capitalism has had its day. The new capitalism represents a transition towards something. It is hopeless, of course, to seek for "firm principles and a concrete aim" for the purpose of "reconciling" monopoly with free competition. The admission of the practical men has quite a different ring from the official praises of the charms of "organized" capitalism sung by its apologists, Schulze-Gaevernitz, Liefmann and similar "theoreticians".

At precisely what period were the "new activities" of the big banks finally established? Jeidels gives us a fairly exact answer to this important question:

"The connections between the banks and industrial enterprises, with their new content, their new forms and their new organs, namely, the big banks which are organized on both a centralized and a decentralized basis, were scarcely a characteristic economic phenomenon before the nineties; in one sense, indeed, this initial date may be advanced to the year 1897, when the important mergers took place and when, for the first time, the new form of decentralized organization was introduced to suit the industrial policy of the banks. This starting-point could perhaps be placed at an even later date, for it was the crisis of 1900 that enormously accelerated and intensified the process of concentration of industry and of banking, consolidated that process, for the first time transformed the connection with industry into the actual monopoly of the big banks, and made this connection much closer and more active." [45]

Thus, the twentieth century marks the turning-point from the old capitalism to the new, from the domination of capital in general to the domination of finance capital.

Chapter 3: Finance Capital and the Financial Oligarchy

"A steadily increasing proportion of capital in industry," writes Hilferding, "ceases to belong to the industrialists who employ it. They obtain the use of it only through the medium of the banks which, in relation to them, represent the owners of the capital. On the other hand, the bank is forced to sink an increasing share of its funds in industry. Thus, to an ever greater degree the banker is being transformed into an industrial capitalist. This bank capital, i.e., capital in money form, which is thus actually transformed into industrial capital, I call 'finance capital'." "Finance capital is capital controlled by banks and employed by industrialists." [46]

This definition is incomplete insofar as it is silent on one extremely important fact—on the increase of concentration of production and of capital to such an extent that concentration is leading, and has led, to monopoly. But throughout the whole of his work, and particularly in the two chapters preceding the one from which this definition is taken, Hilferding stresses the part played by *capitalist monopolies.*

The concentration of production; the monopolies arising therefrom; the merging or coalescence of the banks with industry—such is the history of the rise of finance capital and such is the content of that concept.

We now have to describe how, under the general conditions of commodity production and private property, the "business operations" of capitalist monopolies inevitably lead to the domination of a financial oligarchy. It should be noted that German—and not only German—bourgeois scholars, like Riesser, Schulze-Gaevernitz, Liefmann and others, are all apologists of imperialism and of finance capital. Instead of revealing the "mechanics" of the formation of an oligarchy, its methods, the size of its revenues "impeccable and peccable", its connections with parliaments etc., etc., they

obscure or gloss over them. They evade these "vexed questions" by pompous and vague phrases, appeals to the "sense of responsibility" of bank directors, by praising "the sense of duty" of Prussian officials, giving serious study to the petty details of absolutely ridiculous parliamentary bills for the "supervision" and "regulation" of monopolies, playing spillikins with theories, like, for example, the following "scholarly" definition, arrived at by Professor Liefmann: **" *Commerce is an occupation having for its object the collection, storage and supply of goods .*"** [47] (The Professor's bold-face italics.) . . . From this it would follow that commerce existed in the time of primitive man, who knew nothing about exchange, and that it will exist under socialism!

But the monstrous facts concerning the monstrous rule of the financial oligarchy are so glaring that in all capitalist countries, in America, France and Germany, a whole literature has sprung up, written from the *bourgeois* point of view, but which, nevertheless, gives a fairly truthful picture and criticism—petty-bourgeois, naturally—of this oligarchy.

Paramount importance attaches to the "holding system", already briefly referred to above. The German economist, Heymann, probably the first to call attention to this matter, describes the essence of it in this way:

"The head of the concern controls the principal company (literally: the "mother company"); the latter reigns over the subsidiary companies ("daughter companies"), which in their turn, still control other subsidiaries ("grandchild companies"), etc. In this way, it is possible with a comparatively small capital to dominate immense spheres of production. Indeed, if holding 50 percent of the capital is always sufficient to control a company, the head of the concern needs only one million to control eight million in the second subsidiaries. And if this 'interlocking' is extended, it is possible with one million to control sixteen million, thirty-two million, etc." [48]

As a matter of fact, experience shows that it is sufficient to own 40 percent of the shares of a company in order to direct its affairs, [49] since in practice

a certain number of small, scattered shareholders find it impossible to attend general meetings, etc. The "democratization" of the ownership of shares, from which the bourgeois sophists and opportunist so-called "Social-Democrats" expect (or say that they expect) the "democratization of capital", the strengthening of the role and significance of small scale production, etc., is, in fact, one of the ways of increasing the power of the financial oligarchy. Incidentally, this is why, in the more advanced, or in the older and more "experienced" capitalist countries, the law allows the issue of shares of smaller denomination. In Germany, the law does not permit the issue of shares of less than one thousand marks denomination, and the magnates of German finance look with an envious eye at Britain, where the issue of one-pound shares (= 20 marks, about 10 rubles) is permitted Siemens, one of the biggest industrialists and "financial kings" in Germany, told the Reiclistag on June 7, 1900, that "the one-pound share is the basis of British imperialism". [50] This merchant has a much deeper and more "Marxist" understanding of imperialism than a certain disreputable writer who is held to be one of the founders of Russian Marxism and believes that imperialism is a bad habit of a certain nation....

But the "holding system" not only serves enormously to increase the power of the monopolists; it also enables them to resort with impunity to all sorts of shady and dirty tricks to cheat the public, because formally the directors of the "mother company" are not legally responsible for the "daughter company", which is supposed to be "independent", and *through the medium* of which they can "pull off" *anything* . Here is an example taken from the German review, *Die Bank* , for May 1914:

"The Spring Steel Company of Kassel was regarded some years ago as being one of the most profitable enterprises in Germany. Through bad management its dividends fell from 15 percent to nil. It appears that the Board, without consulting the shareholders, had loaned *six million marks* to one of its 'daughter companies', the Hassia Company, which had a nominal capital of only some hundreds of thousands of marks. This commitment, amounting to nearly treble the capital of the 'mother company', was never mentioned in its balance-sheets. This omission was quite legal and could be hushed up for two whole years because it did not violate any point of

company law. The chairman of the Supervisory Board, who as the responsible head had signed the false balance-sheets, was, and still is, the president of the Kassel Chamber of Commerce. The shareholders only heard of the loan to the Hassia Company long afterwards, when it had been proved to be a mistake"... (the writer should put this word in inverted commas) ... "and when Spring Steel shares dropped nearly 100 percent, because those in the know were getting rid of them....

" *This typical example of balance-sheet jugglery, quite common* in joint-stock companies, explains why their Boards of Directors are willing to undertake risky transactions with a far lighter heart than individual businessmen. Modern methods of drawing up balance-sheets not only make it possible to conceal doubtful undertakings from the ordinary shareholder, but also allow the people most concerned to escape the consequence of unsuccessful speculation by selling their shares in time when the individual businessman risks his own skin in everything he does....

"The balance-sheets of many joint-stock companies put us in mind of the palimpsests of the Middle Ages from which the visible inscription had first to be erased in order to discover beneath it another inscription giving the real meaning of the document. [Palimpsests are parchment documents from which the original inscription has been erased and another inscription imposed.]

"The simplest and, therefore, most common procedure for making balance-sheets indecipherable is to divide a single business into several parts by setting up 'daughter companies'—or by annexing them. The advantages of this system for various purposes—legal and illegal—are so evident that big companies which do not employ it are quite the exception." [51]

As an example of a huge monopolist company that extensively employs this system, the author quotes the famous General Electric Company (the A.E.G., to which I shall refer again later on). In 1912, it was calculated that this company held shares in 175 to 200 other companies, dominating them,

of course, and thus controlling a total capital of about *1,500 million marks* . [52]

None of the rules of control, the publication of balance-sheets, the drawing up of balance-sheets according to a definite form, the public auditing of accounts, etc., the things about which well-intentioned professors and officials—that is, those imbued with the good intention of defending and prettifying capitalism—discourse to the public, are of any avail; for private property is sacred, and no one can be prohibited from buying, selling, exchanging or hypothecating shares, etc.

The extent to which this "holding system" has developed in the big Russian banks may be judged by the figures given by E. Agalid, who for fifteen years was an official of the Russo-Chinese Bank and who, in May 1914, published a book, not altogether correctly entitled *Big Banks and the World Market.* [53] The author divides the big Russian banks into two main groups: (a) banks that come under the "holding system", and (b) "independent" banks—"independence" however, being arbitrarily taken to mean independence of *foreign* banks. The author divides the first group into three subgroups: (1) German holdings, (2) British holdings, and (3) French holdings, having in view the "holdings" and domination of the big foreign banks of the particular country mentioned. The author divides the capital of the banks into "productively" invested capital (industrial and commercial undertakings), and "speculatively" invested capital (in Stock Exchange and financial operations), assuming, from his petty-bourgeois reformist point of view, that it is possible, under capitalism, to separate the first form of investment from the second and to abolish the second form.

Here are the figures he supplies:

Bank assets (Oct-Nov 1912) in million rubles

Groups of Russian banks	Capital Invested		
	Productively	Speculatively	Total
Siberian Commercial, Russian, International, and Discount Bank	413.7	859.1	1,272.8
Commercial and Industrial, Russo-British	239.3	169.1	408.4
Russian-Asiatic, St. Petersburg Private, Azov-Don, Union Moscow, Russo-French Commercial	711.8	661.2	1,373.0
Subtotal (11 banks)	1,364.8	1,689.4	3,054.2
Moscow Merchants, Volga-Kama, Junker and Co., St. Petersburg Commercial (formerly Wawelberg), Bank of Moscow (formerly Ryabushinsky), Moscow Discount, Moscow Commercial, Moscow Private	504.2	391.1	895.3
Grand total (19 banks)	1,869.0	2,080.5	3,949.5

According to these figures, of the approximately 4,000 million rubles making up the "working" capital of the big banks, *more than three-fourths* , more than 3,000 million, belonged to banks which in reality were only "daughter companies" of foreign banks, and chiefly of Paris banks (the famous trio: Union Parisienne, Paris et Pays-Bas and Société Générale), and of Berlin banks (particularly the Deutsche Bank and Disconto-Gesellschaft). Two of the biggest Russian banks, the Russian (Russian Bank for Foreign Trade) and the International (St. Petersburg International Commercial Bank), between 1906 and 1912 increased their capital from 44 to 98 million rubles, and their reserves from 15 million to 39 million "employing three-fourths German capital". The first bank belongs to the Berlin Deutsche Bank "concern" and the second to the Berlin Disconto-Gesellschaft. The worthy Agahd is deeply indignant at the majority of the shares being held by the Berlin banks, so that the Russian shareholders are, therefore, powerless. Naturally, the country which exports capital skims the cream; for example, the Berlin Deutsche Bank, before placing the shares of the Siberian Commercial Bank on the Berlin market, kept them in its portfolio for a whole year, and then sold them at the rate of 193 for 100, that is, at nearly twice their nominal value, "earning" a profit of nearly six million rubles, which Hilferding calls "promoter's profits".

Our author puts the total "capacity" of the principal St. Petersburg banks at 8,235 million rubles, well over 8,000 million, and the "holdings", or rather, the extent to which foreign banks dominated them, he estimates as follows: French banks, 55 percent; British, 10 percent; German, 35 percent. The author calculates that of the total of 8,235 million rubles of functioning capital, 3,687 million rubles, or over 40 percent, fall to the share of the Produgol and Prodamet syndicates and the syndicates in the oil, metallurgical and cement industries. Thus, owing to the formation of capitalist monopolies, the merging of bank and industrial capital has also made enormous strides in Russia.

Finance capital, concentrated in a few hands and exercising a virtual monopoly, exacts enormous and ever-increasing profits from the floating of companies, issue of stock, state loans, etc., strengthens the domination of the financial oligarchy and levies tribute upon the whole of society for the benefit of monopolists. Here is an example, taken from a multitude of others, of the "business" methods of the American trusts, quoted by Hilferding. In 1887, Havemeyer founded the Sugar Trust by amalgamating fifteen small firms, whose total capital amounted to 6,500,000 dollars. Suitably "watered", as the Americans say, the capital of the trust was declared to be 50 million dollars. This "overcapitalization" anticipated the monopoly profits, in the same way as the United States Steel Corporation anticipates its monopoly profits in buying up as many iron ore fields as possible. In fact, the Sugar Trust set up monopoly prices, which secured it such profits that it could pay 10 percent dividend on capital "watered" *sevenfold, or about 70 percent on the capital actually invested at the time the trust was formed!* In 1909, the capital of the Sugar Trust amounted to 90 million dollars. In twenty-two years, it had increased its capital more than tenfold.

In France the domination of the "financial oligarchy" (*Against the Financial Oligarchy* in France, the title of the well-known book by Lysis, the fifth edition of which was published in 1908) assumed a form that was only slightly different. Four of the most powerful banks enjoy, not a relative, but an "absolute monopoly" in the issue of bonds. In reality, this is a "trust of big banks". And monopoly ensures monopoly profits from bond

issues. Usually a borrowing country does not get more than 90 percent of the sum of the loan, the remaining 10 percent goes to the banks and other middlemen. The profit made by the banks out of the Russo-Chinese loan of 400 million francs amounted to 8 percent; out of the Russian (1904) loan of 800 million francs the profit amounted to 10 percent; and out of the Moroccan (1904) loan of 62,500,000 francs it amounted to 18.75 percent. Capitalism, which began its development with petty usury capital, is ending its development with gigantic usury capital. "The French," says Lysis, "are the usurers of Europe." All the conditions of economic life are being profoundly modified by this transformation of capitalism. With a stationary population, and stagnant industry, commerce and shipping, the "country" can grow rich by usury. "Fifty persons, representing a capital of eight million francs, can control *2,000 million* francs deposited in four banks." The "holding system", with which we are already familiar, leads to the same result. One of the biggest banks, the Société Générale for instance, issues 64,000 bonds for its "daughter company", the Egyptian Sugar Refineries. The bonds are issued at 150 percent, i.e., the bank gains 50 centimes on the franc. The dividends of the new company were found to be fictitious, the "public" lost from 90 to 100 million francs. "One of the directors of the Société Générale was a member of the board of directors of the Sugar Refineries." It is not surprising that the author is driven to the conclusion that "the French Republic is a financial monarchy"; "it is the complete domination of the financial oligarchy; the latter dominates over the press and the government." [54]

The extraordinarily high rate of profit obtained from the issue of bonds, which is one of the principal functions of finance capital, plays a very important part in the development and consolidation of the financial oligarchy. "There is not a single business of this type within the country that brings in profits even approximately equal to those obtained from the floatation of foreign loans," says *Die Bank* . [55]

"No banking operation brings in profits comparable with those obtained from the issue of securities!" According to the *German Economist* , the average annual profits made on the issue of industrial stock were as follows:

Year	Avg annual German industrial stock profit
1895	38.6%
1896	36.1%
1897	66.7%
1898	67.7%
1899	66.9%
1900	55.2%

“In the ten years from 1891 to 1900, more than a thousand million marks were ‘earned’ by issuing German industrial stock.” [56]

During periods of industrial boom, the profits of finance capital are immense, but during periods of depression, small and unsound businesses go out of existence, and the big banks acquire “holdings” in them by buying them up for a mere song, or participate in profitable schemes for their “reconstruction” and “reorganization”. In the “reconstruction” of undertakings which have been running at a loss, “the share capital is written down, that is, profits are distributed on a smaller capital and continue to be calculated on this smaller basis. Or, if the income has fallen to zero, new capital is called in, which, combined with the old and less remunerative capital, will bring in an adequate return.” “Incidentally,” adds Hilferding, “all these reorganizations and reconstructions have a twofold significance for the banks: first, as profitable transactions; and secondly, as opportunities for securing control of the companies in difficulties.” [57]

Here is an instance. The Union Mining Company of Dortmund was founded in 1872. Share capital was issued to the amount of nearly 40 million marks and the market price of the shares rose to 170 after it had paid a 12 percent dividend for its first year. Finance capital skimmed the cream and earned a trifle of something like 28 million marks. The principal sponsor of this company was that very big German Disconto-Gesellschaft which so successfully attained a capital of 300 million marks. Later, the dividends of the Union declined to nil; the shareholders had to consent to a “writing down” of capital, that is, to losing some of it in order not to lose it all. By a

series of “reconstructions”, more than 73 million marks were written off the books of the Union in the course of thirty years. “At the present time, the original shareholders of the company possess only 5 percent of the nominal value of their shares” [58] but the banks “earned something” out of every “reconstruction”.

Speculation in land situated in the suburbs of rapidly growing big towns is a particularly profitable operation for finance capital. The monopoly of the banks merges here with the monopoly of ground-rent and with monopoly of the means of communication, since the rise in the price of land and the possibility of selling it profitably in lots, etc., is mainly dependent on good means of communication with the center of the town; and these means of communication are in the hands of large companies which are connected with these same banks through the holding system and the distribution of seats on the boards. As a result we get what the German writer, L. Eschwege, a contributor to *Die Bank* who has made a special study of real estate business and mortgages, etc., calls a “bog”. Frantic speculation in suburban building lots; collapse of building enterprises like the Berlin firm of Boswau and Knauer, which acquired as much as 100 million marks with the help of the “sound and solid” Deutsche Bank—the latter, of course, acting through the holding system, i.e., secretly, behind the scenes—and got out of it with a loss of “only” 12 million marks, then the ruin of small proprietors and of workers who get nothing from the fictitious building firms, fraudulent deals with the “honest” Berlin police and administration for the purpose of gaining control of the issue of cadastral certificates, building licenses, etc., etc. [59]

“American ethics”, which the European professors and well-meaning bourgeois so hypocritically deplore, have, in the age of finance capital, become the ethics of literally every large city in any country.

At the beginning of 1914, there was talk in Berlin of the formation of a “transport trust”, i.e., of establishing “community of interests” between the three Berlin transport undertakings: the city electric railway, the tramway company and the omnibus company. “We have been aware,” wrote *Die Bank* , “that this plan was contemplated ever since it became known that the

majority of the shares in the bus company had been acquired by the other two transport companies.... We may fully believe those who are pursuing this aim when they say that by uniting the transport services, they will secure economies, part of which will in time benefit the public. But the question is complicated by the fact that behind the transport trust that is being formed are the banks, which, if they desire, can subordinate the means of transportation, which they have monopolized, to the interests of their real estate business. To be convinced of the reasonableness of such a conjecture, we need only recall that the interests of the big banks that encouraged the formation of the Electric Railway Company were already involved in it at the time the company was formed. That is to say: the interests of this transport undertaking were interlocked with the real estate interests. The point is that the eastern line of this railway was to run across land which this bank sold at an enormous profit for itself and for several partners in the transactions when it became certain the line was to be laid down." [60]

A monopoly, once it is formed and controls thousands of millions, inevitably penetrates into *every* sphere of public life, regardless of the form of government and all other "details". In German economic literature one usually comes across obsequious praise of the integrity of the Prussian bureaucracy, and allusions to the French Panama scandal and to political corruption in America. But the fact is that even bourgeois literature devoted to German banking matters constantly has to go far beyond the field of purely banking operations; it speaks, for instance, about "the attraction of the banks" in reference to the increasing frequency with which public officials take employment with the banks, as follows: "How about the integrity of a state official who in his innermost heart is aspiring to a soft job in the Behrenstrasse?" [61] (The Berlin street where the head office of the Deutsche Bank is situated.) In 1909, the publisher of *Die Bank* , Alfred Lansburgh, wrote an article entitled "The Economic Significance of Byzantinism", in which he incidentally referred to Wilhelm II's tour of Palestine, and to "the immediate result of this journey, the construction of the Baghdad railway, that fatal 'great product of German enterprise', which is more responsible for the 'encirclement' than all our political blunders put together". [62] (By encirclement is meant the policy of Edward VII to

isolate Germany and surround her with an imperialist anti-German alliance.) In 1911, Eschwege, the contributor to this same magazine to whom I have already referred, wrote an article entitled "Plutocracy and Bureaucracy", in which he exposed, for example, the case of a German official named Völker, who was a zealous member of the Cartel Committee and who, it turned out some time later, obtained a lucrative post in the biggest cartel, the Steel Syndicate. Similar cases, by no means casual, forced this bourgeois author to admit that "the economic liberty guaranteed by the German Constitution has become in many departments of economic life, a meaningless phrase" and that under the existing rule of the plutocracy, "even the widest political liberty cannot save us from being converted into a nation of unfree people". [63]

As for Russia, I shall confine myself to one example. Some years ago, all the newspapers announced that Davydov, the director of the Credit Department of the Treasury, had resigned his post to take employment with a certain big bank at a salary which, according to the contract, would total over one million rubles in the course of several years. The Credit Department is an institution, the function of which is to "coordinate the activities of all the credit institutions of the country" and which grants subsidies to banks in St. Petersburg and Moscow amounting to between 800 and 1,000 million rubles." [64]

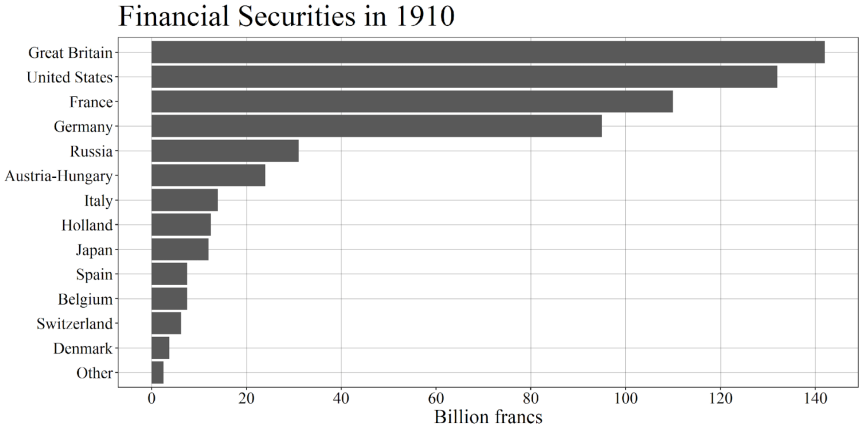
It is characteristic of capitalism in general that the ownership of capital is separated from the application of capital to production, that money capital is separated from industrial or productive capital, and that the rentier who lives entirely on income obtained from money capital, is separated from the entrepreneur and from all who are directly concerned in the management of capital. Imperialism, or the domination of finance capital, is that highest stage of capitalism in which this separation reaches vast proportions. The supremacy of finance capital over all other forms of capital means the predominance of the rentier and of the financial oligarchy; it means that a small number of financially "powerful" states stand out among all the rest. The extent to which this process is going on may be judged from the statistics on emissions, i.e., the issue of all kinds of securities.

In the *Bulletin of the International Statistical Institute* , A. Neymarck [65] has published very comprehensive, complete and comparative figures covering the issue of securities all over the world, which have been repeatedly quoted in part in economic literature. The following are the totals he gives for four decades:

Year	Issues in billion francs
1871-1880	76.1
1881-1890	64.5
1891-1900	100.4
1901-1910	197.8

In the 1870s the total amount of issues for the whole world was high, owing particularly to the loans floated in connection with the Franco-Prussian War, and the company-promotion boom which set in in Germany after the war. On the whole, the increase was relatively not very rapid during the three last decades of the nineteenth century, and only in the first ten years of the twentieth century is an enormous increase of almost 100 percent to be observed. Thus the beginning of the twentieth century marks the turning-point, not only in the growth of monopolies (cartels, syndicates, trusts), of which we have already spoken, but also in the growth of finance capital.

Neymarck estimates the total amount of issued securities currently in the world in 1910 at about 815,000 million francs. Deducting from this sum amounts which might have been duplicated, he reduces the total to 575,000-600,000 million, which is distributed among the various countries as follows (I take 600,000 million):



From these figures we at once see standing out in sharp relief four of the richest capitalist countries, each of which holds securities to amounts ranging approximately from 100,000 to 150,000 million francs. Of these four countries, two, Britain and France, are the oldest capitalist countries, and, as we shall see, possess the most colonies; the other two, the United States and Germany, are capitalist countries leading in the rapidity of development and the degree of extension of capitalist monopolies in industry. Together, these four countries own 479,000 million francs, that is, nearly 80 percent of the world's finance capital. In one way or another, nearly the whole of the rest of the world is more or less the debtor to and tributary of these international banker countries, these four "pillars" of world finance capital.

It is particularly important to examine the part which the export of capital plays in creating the international network of dependence on and connections of finance capital.

Chapter 4: Export of Capital

Typical of the old capitalism, when free competition held undivided sway, was the export of goods. Typical of the latest stage of capitalism, when monopolies rule, is the export of capital.

Capitalism is commodity production at its highest stage of development, when labor-power itself becomes a commodity. The growth of internal exchange, and, particularly, of international exchange, is a characteristic feature of capitalism. The uneven and spasmodic development of individual enterprises, individual branches of industry and individual countries is inevitable under the capitalist system. England became a capitalist country before any other, and by the middle of the nineteenth century, having adopted free trade, claimed to be the "workshop of the world", the supplier of manufactured goods to all countries, which in exchange were to keep her provided with raw materials. But in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, this monopoly was already undermined; for other countries, sheltering themselves with "protective" tariffs, developed into independent capitalist states. On the threshold of the twentieth century we see the formation of a new type of monopoly: firstly, monopolist associations of capitalists in all capitalistically developed countries; secondly, the monopolist position of a few very rich countries, in which the accumulation of capital has reached gigantic proportions. An enormous "surplus of capital" has arisen in the advanced countries.

It goes without saying that if capitalism could develop agriculture, which today is everywhere lagging terribly behind industry, if it could raise the living standards of the masses, who in spite of the amazing technical progress are everywhere still half-starved and poverty-stricken, there could be no question of a surplus of capital. This "argument" is very often advanced by the petty-bourgeois critics of capitalism. But if capitalism did these things it would not be capitalism; for both uneven development and a semi-starvation level of existence of the masses are fundamental and

inevitable conditions and constitute premises of this mode of production. As long as capitalism remains what it is, surplus capital will be utilized not for the purpose of raising the standard of living of the masses in a given country, for this would mean a decline in profits for the capitalists, but for the purpose of increasing profits by exporting capital abroad to the backward countries. In these backward countries profits are usually high, for capital is scarce, the price of land is relatively low, wages are low, raw materials are cheap. The export of capital is made possible by a number of backward countries having already been drawn into world capitalist intercourse; main railways have either been or are being built in those countries, elementary conditions for industrial development have been created, etc. The need to export capital arises from the fact that in a few countries capitalism has become "overripe" and (owing to the backward state of agriculture and the poverty of the masses) capital cannot find a field for "profitable" investment.

Here are approximate figures showing the amount of capital invested abroad by the three principal countries [66] :

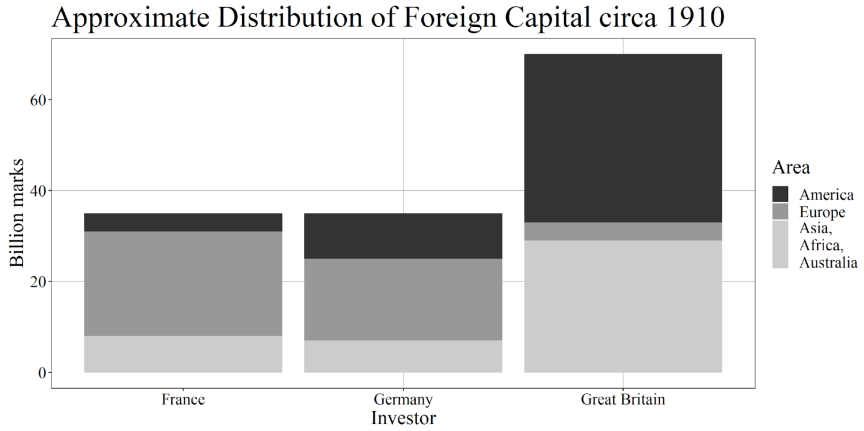
Capital Invested Abroad
in billion francs

Year	Britain	France	Germany
1862	3.6	-	-
1869	-	10.0	-
1872	15.0	-	-
1880	-	15.0	-
1882	22.0	-	NA
1890	-	20.0	-
1893	42.0	-	NA
1902	62.0	27-37	12.5
1914	75-100.0	60.0	44.0

This table shows that the export of capital reached enormous dimensions only at the beginning of the twentieth century. Before the war the capital invested abroad by the three principal countries amounted to between 175,000 million and 200,000 million francs. At the modest rate of 5 percent,

the income from this sum should reach from 8,000 to 10,000 million francs a year—a sound basis for the imperialist oppression and exploitation of most of the countries and nations of the world, for the capitalist parasitism of a handful of wealthy states!

How is this capital invested abroad distributed among the various countries? *Where* is it invested? Only an approximate answer can be given to these questions, but it is one sufficient to throw light on certain general relations and connections of modern imperialism.



The principal spheres of investment of British capital are the British colonies, which are very large also in America (for example, Canada), not to mention Asia, etc. In this case, enormous exports of capital are bound up most closely with vast colonies, of tile importance of which for imperialism I shall speak later. In the case of France the situation is different. French capital exports are invested mainly in Europe, primarily in Russia (at least ten thousand million francs). This is mainly loan capital, government loans, and not capital invested in industrial undertakings. Unlike British colonial imperialism, French imperialism might be termed usury imperialism. In the case of Germany, we have a third type; colonies are inconsiderable, and German capital invested abroad is divided most evenly between Europe and America.

The export of capital influences and greatly accelerates the development of capitalism in those countries to which it is exported. While, therefore, the

export of capital may tend to a certain extent to arrest development in the capital-exporting countries, it can only do so by expanding and deepening the further development of capitalism throughout the world.

The capital-exporting countries are nearly always able to obtain certain "advantages", the character of which throws light on the peculiarity of the epoch of finance capital and monopoly. The following passage, for instance, appeared in the Berlin review, *Die Bank* , for October 1913:

"A comedy worthy of the pen of Aristophanes is lately being played on the international capital market. Numerous foreign countries, from Spain to the Balkan states, from Russia to Argentina, Brazil and China, are openly or secretly coming into the big money market with demands, sometimes very persistent, for loans. The money markets are not very bright at the moment and the political outlook is not promising. But not a single money market dares to refuse a loan for fear that its neighbor may forestall it, consent to grant a loan and so secure some reciprocal service. In these international transactions the creditor nearly always manages to secure some extra benefit: a favorable clause in a commercial treaty, a coating station, a contract to construct a harbor, a fat concession, or an order for guns." [67]

Finance capital has created the epoch of monopolies, and monopolies introduce monopolist principles everywhere: the utilization of "connections" for profitable transactions takes the place of competition on the open market. The most usual thing is to stipulate that part of the loan granted shall be spent on purchases in the creditor country, particularly on orders for war materials, or for ships, etc. In the course of the last two decades (1890-1910), France has very often resorted to this method. The export of capital thus becomes a means of encouraging the export of commodities. In this connection, transactions between particularly big firms assume a form which, as Schilder [68] "mildly" puts it, "borders on corruption". Krupp in Germany, Schneider in France, Armstrong in Britain are instances of firms which have close connections with powerful banks and governments and which cannot easily be "ignored" when a loan is being arranged.

France, when granting loans to Russia, “squeezed” her in the commercial treaty of September 16, 1905, stipulating for certain concessions to run till 1917. She did the same in the commercial treaty with Japan of August 19, 1911. The tariff war between Austria and Serbia, which lasted, with a seven months’ interval, from 1906 to 1911, was partly caused by Austria and France competing to supply Serbia with war materials. In January 1912, Paul Deschanel stated in the Chamber of Deputies that from 1908 to 1911 French firms had supplied war materials to Serbia to the value of 45 million francs.

A report from the Austro-Hungarian Consul at San-Paulo (Brazil) states: “The Brazilian railways are being built chiefly by French, Belgian, British and German capital. In the financial operations connected with the construction of these railways the countries involved stipulate orders for the necessary railway materials.”

Thus finance capital, literally, one might say, spreads its net over all countries of the world. An important role in this is played by banks founded in the colonies and by their branches. German imperialists look with envy at the “old” colonial countries which have been particularly “successful” in providing for themselves in this respect. In 1904, Great Britain had 50 colonial banks with 2,279 branches (in 1910 there were 72 banks with 5,449 branches), France had 20 with 136 branches; Holland, 16 with 68 branches; and Germany had “only” 13 with 70 branches. [69] The American capitalists, in their turn, are jealous of the English and German: “In South America,” they complained in 1915, “five German banks have forty branches and five British banks have seventy branches.... Britain and Germany have invested in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay in the last twenty-five years approximately four thousand million dollars, and as a result together enjoy 46 percent of the total trade of these three countries.” [70]

The capital-exporting countries have divided the world among themselves in the figurative sense of the term. But finance capital has led to the *actual* division of the world.

Chapter 5: Division of the World Among Capitalist Associations

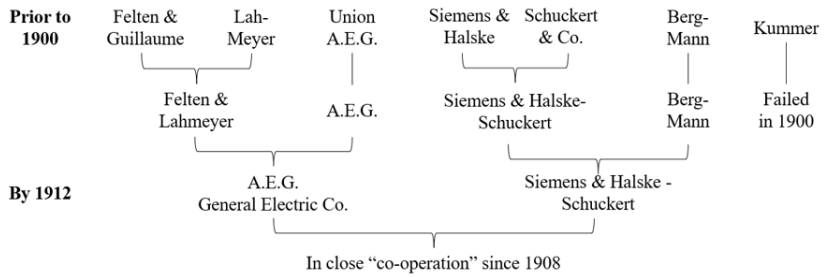
Monopolist capitalist associations, cartels, syndicates and trusts first divided the home market among themselves and obtained more or less complete possession of the industry of their own country. But under capitalism the home market is inevitably bound up with the foreign market. Capitalism long ago created a world market. As the export of capital increased, and as the foreign and colonial connections and "spheres of influence" of the big monopolist associations expanded in all ways, things "naturally" gravitated towards an international agreement among these associations, and towards the formation of international cartels.

This is a new stage of world concentration of capital and production, incomparably higher than the preceding stages. Let us see how this supermonopoly develops.

The electrical industry is highly typical of the latest technical achievements and is most typical of capitalism at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. This industry has developed most in the two leaders of the new capitalist countries, the United States and Germany. In Germany, the crisis of 1900 gave a particularly strong impetus to its concentration. During the crisis, the banks, which by that time had become fairly well merged with industry, enormously accelerated and intensified the ruin of relatively small firms and their absorption by the large ones. "The banks," writes Jeidels, "refused a helping hand to the very firms in greatest need of capital, and brought on first a frenzied boom and then the hopeless failure of the companies which had not been connected with them closely enough." [71]

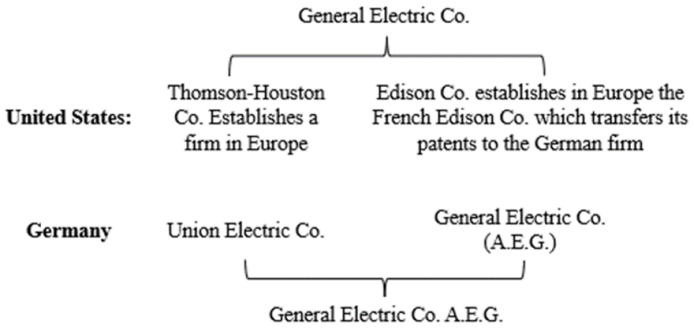
As a result, after 1900, concentration in Germany progressed with giant strides. Up to 1900 there had been seven or eight "groups" in the electrical

industry. Each consisted of several companies (altogether there were 28) and each was backed by 2 to 11 banks. Between 1908 and 1912 all these groups were merged into two, or one. The following diagram shows the process:



The famous A.E.G. (General Electric Company), which grew up in this way, controls 175 to 200 companies (through the "holding" system), and a total capital of approximately *1,500 million* marks. Of direct agencies abroad alone, it has thirty-four, of which twelve are joint-stock companies, in more than ten countries. As early as 1904 the amount of capital invested abroad by the German electrical industry was estimated at 233 million marks. Of this sum, 62 million were invested in Russia. Needless to say, the A.E.G. is a huge "combine"—its manufacturing companies alone number no less than sixteen—producing the most diverse articles, from cables and insulators to motor-cars and flying machines.

But concentration in Europe was also a component part of the process of concentration in America, which developed in the following way:


General Electric Co.
United States:
Thomson-Houston Co. Establishes a firm in Europe
Edison Co. establishes in Europe the French Edison Co. which transfers its patents to the German firm
Germany
Union Electric Co.
General Electric Co. (A.E.G.)
General Electric Co. A.E.G.

Thus, *two* electrical "great powers" were formed: "there are no other electrical companies in the world *completely* independent of them," wrote Heinig in his article "The Path of the Electric Trust". An idea, although far from complete, of the turnover and the size of the enterprises of the two "trusts" can be obtained from the following figures:

General Electric Co	Year	Turnover in million marks	Employees	Net profits in million marks
America	1907	252	28,000	35.4
(G.E.C)	1910	298	32,000	45.6
Germany	1907	216	30,700	14.5
(A.E.G)	1911	362	60,800	21.7

And then, in 1907, the German and American trusts concluded an agreement by which they divided the world between them. Competition between them ceased. The American General Electric Company (G.E.C.) "got" the United States and Canada. The German General Electric Company (A.E.G.) "got" Germany, Austria, Russia, Holland, Denmark, Switzerland, Turkey and the Balkans. Special agreements, naturally secret, were concluded regarding the penetration of "daughter companies" into new branches of industry, into "new" countries formally not yet allotted. The two trusts were to exchange inventions and experiments. [72]

The difficulty of competing against this trust, actually a single world-wide trust controlling a capital of several thousand million, with "branches", agencies, representatives, connections, etc., in every corner of the world, is self-evident. But the division of the world between two powerful trusts does not preclude redivision if the relation of forces changes as a result of uneven development, war, bankruptcy, etc.

An instructive example of an attempt at such a redivision, of the struggle for redivision, is provided by the oil industry.

"The world oil market," wrote Jeidels in 1905, "is even today still divided between two great financial groups—Rockefeller's American Standard Oil Co., and Rothschild and Nobel, the controlling interests of the Russian oil fields in Baku. The two groups are closely connected. But for several years five enemies have been threatening their monopoly" [73] : (1) the exhaustion of the American oil fields; (2) the competition of the firm of Mantashev of Baku; (3) the Austrian oilfields; (4) the Romanian oil fields; (5) the overseas oil fields, particularly in the Dutch colonies (the extremely rich firms, Samuel, and Shell, also connected with British capital). The three last groups are connected with the big German banks, headed by the huge Deutsche Bank. These banks independently and systematically developed the oil industry in Romania, for example, in order to have a foothold of their "own". In 1907, the foreign capital invested in the Romanian oil industry was estimated at 185 million francs, of which 74 million was German capital. [74]

A struggle began for the "division of the world", as, in fact, it is called in economic literature. On the one hand, the Rockefeller "oil trust" wanted to lay its hands on *everything* ; it formed a "daughter company" *right in* Holland, and bought up oil fields in the Dutch Indies, in order to strike at its principal enemy, the Anglo-Dutch Shell trust. On the other hand, the Deutsche Bank and the other German banks aimed at "retaining" Romania "for themselves" and at uniting her with Russia against Rockefeller. The latter possessed far more capital and an excellent system of oil transportation and distribution. The struggle had to end, and did end in 1907, with the utter defeat of the Deutsche Bank, which was confronted with the alternative: either to liquidate its "oil interests" and lose millions, or submit. It chose to submit, and concluded a very disadvantageous agreement with the "oil trust". The Deutsche Bank agreed "not to attempt anything which might injure American interests". Provision was made, however, for the annulment of the agreement in the event of Germany establishing a state oil monopoly.

Then the "comedy of oil" began. One of the German finance kings, von Gwinner, a director of the Deutsche Bank, through his private secretary,

Stauss, launched a campaign *for* a state oil monopoly. The gigantic machine of the huge German bank and all its wide "connections" were set in motion. The press bubbled over with "patriotic" indignation against the "yoke" of the American trust, and, on March 15, 1911, the Reichstag, by an almost unanimous vote, adopted a motion asking the government to introduce a bill for the establishment of an oil monopoly. The government seized upon this "popular" idea, and the game of the Deutsche Bank, which hoped to cheat its American counterpart and improve its business by a state monopoly, appeared to have been won. The German oil magnates already saw visions of enormous profits, which would not be less than those of the Russian sugar refiners.... But, firstly, the big German banks quarreled among themselves over the division of the spoils. The Disconto-Gesellschaft exposed the covetous aims of the Deutsche Bank; secondly, the government took fright at the prospect of a struggle with Rockefeller, for it was very doubtful whether Germany could be sure of obtaining oil from other sources (the Romanian output was small); thirdly, just at that time the 1913 credits of a thousand million marks were voted for Germany's war preparations. The oil monopoly project was postponed. The Rockefeller "oil trust" came out of the struggle, for the time being, victorious.

The Berlin review, *Die Bank* , wrote in this connection that Germany could fight the oil trust only by establishing an electricity monopoly and by converting water-power into cheap electricity. "But," the author added, "the electricity monopoly will come when the producers need it, that is to say, when the next great crash in the electrical industry is imminent, and when the gigantic, expensive power stations now being put up at great cost everywhere by private electrical concerns, which are already obtaining certain franchises from towns, from states, etc., can no longer work at a profit. Water-power will then have to be used. But it will be impossible to convert it into cheap electricity at state expense; it will also have to be handed over to a 'private monopoly controlled by the state', because private industry has already concluded a number of contracts and has stipulated for heavy compensation.... So it was with the nitrate monopoly, so it is with the oil monopoly, so it will be with the electric power monopoly. It is time our state socialists, who allow themselves to be blinded by a beautiful principle, understood, at last, that in Germany the monopolies have never pursued the aim, nor have they had the result, of benefiting the consumer, or even of

handing over to the state part of the promoter's profits; they have served only to facilitate, at the expense of the state, the recovery of private industries which were on the verge of bankruptcy. [75]

Such are the valuable admissions which the German bourgeois economists are forced to make. We see plainly here how private and state monopolies are interwoven in the epoch of finance capital; how both are but separate links in the imperialist struggle between the big monopolists for the division of the world.

In merchant shipping, the tremendous development of concentration has ended also in the division of the world. In Germany two powerful companies have come to the fore: the Hamburg-Amerika and the Norddeutscher Lloyd, each having a capital of 200 million marks (in stocks and bonds) and possessing shipping tonnage to the value of 185 to 189 million marks. On the other hand, in America, on January 1, 1903, the International Mercantile Marine Co., known as the Morgan trust, was formed; it united nine American and British steamship companies, and possessed a capital of 120 million dollars (480 million marks). As early as 1903, the German giants and this American-British trust concluded an agreement to divide the world with a consequent division of profits. The German companies undertook not to compete in the Anglo-American traffic. Which ports were to be "allotted" to each was precisely stipulated; a joint committee of control was set up, etc. This agreement was concluded for twenty years, with the prudent provision for its annulment in the event of war. [76]

Extremely instructive also is the story of the formation of the International Rail Cartel. The first attempt of the British, Belgian and German rail manufacturers to form such a cartel was made as early as 1884, during a severe industrial depression. The manufacturers agreed not to compete with one another in the home markets of the countries involved, and they divided the foreign markets in the following quotas: Great Britain, 66 percent; Germany, 27 percent; Belgium, 7 percent. India was reserved entirely for Great Britain. Joint war was declared against a British firm which remained outside the cartel, the cost of which was met by a percentage levy on all

sales. But in 1886 the cartel collapsed when two British firms retired from it. It is characteristic that agreement could not be achieved during subsequent boom periods.

At the beginning of 1904, the German steel syndicate was formed. In November 1904, the International Rail Cartel was revived, with the following quotas: Britain, 53.5 percent; Germany, 28.83 percent; Belgium, 17.67 percent. France came in later and received 4.8 percent, 5.8 percent and 6.4 percent in the first, second and third year respectively, over and above the 100 percent limit, i.e., out of a total of 104.8 percent, etc. In 1905, the United States Steel Corporation entered the cartel; then Austria and Spain. "At the present time," wrote Vogelstein in 1910, "the division of the world is complete, and the big consumers, primarily the state railways—since the world has been parceled out without consideration for their interests—can now dwell like the poet in the heavens of Jupiter." [77]

Let me also mention the International Zinc Syndicate which was established in 1909 and which precisely apportioned output among five groups of factories: German, Belgian, French, Spanish and British; and also the International Dynamite Trust, which, Liefmann says, is "quite a modern, close alliance of all the German explosives manufacturers who, with the French and American dynamite manufacturers, organized in a similar manner, have divided the whole world among themselves, so to speak". [78]

Liefmann calculated that in 1897 there were altogether about forty international cartels in which Germany had a share, while in 1910 there were about a hundred.

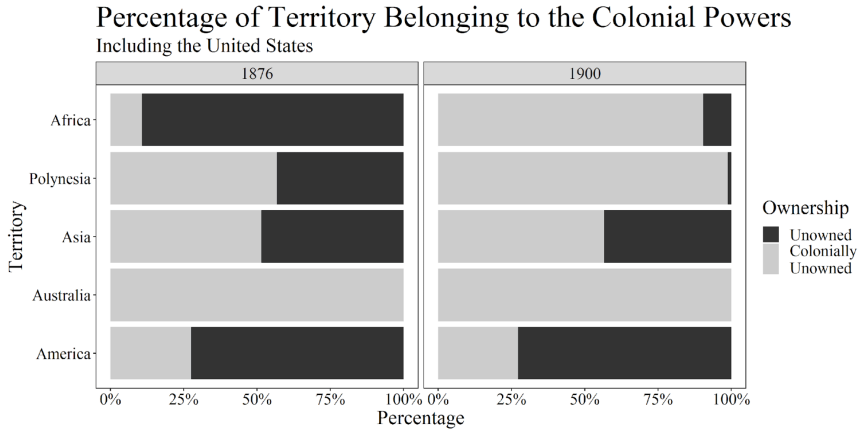
Certain bourgeois writers (now joined by Karl Kautsky, who has completely abandoned the Marxist position he had held, for example, in 1909) have expressed the opinion that international cartels, being one of the most striking expressions of the internationalization of capital, give the hope of peace among nations under capitalism. Theoretically, this opinion is absolutely absurd, while in practice it is sophistry and a dishonest defense of the worst opportunism. International cartels show to what point capitalist

monopolies have developed, and *the object* of the struggle between the various capitalist associations. This last circumstance is the most important; it alone shows us the historico-economic meaning of what is taking place; for the *forms* of the struggle may and do constantly change in accordance with varying, relatively specific and temporary causes, but the *substance* of the struggle, its class *content* , positively *cannot* change while classes exist. Naturally, it is in the interests of, for example, the German bourgeoisie, to whose side Kautsky has in effect gone over in his theoretical arguments (I shall deal with this later), to obscure the *substance* of the present economic struggle (the division of the world) and to emphasize now this and now another *form* of the struggle. Kautsky makes the same mistake. Of course, we have in mind not only the German bourgeoisie, but the bourgeoisie all over the world. The capitalists divide the world, not out of any particular malice, but because the degree of concentration which has been reached forces them to adopt this method in order to obtain profits. And they divide it "in proportion to capital", "in proportion to strength", because there cannot be any other method of division under commodity production and capitalism. But strength varies with the degree of economic and political development. In order to understand what is taking place, it is necessary to know what questions are settled by the changes in strength. The question as to whether these changes are "purely" economic or non-economic (e.g., military) is a secondary one, which cannot in the least affect fundamental views on the latest epoch of capitalism. To substitute the question of the form of the struggle and agreements (today peaceful, tomorrow warlike, the next day warlike again) for the question of the substance of the struggle and agreements between capitalist associations is to sink to the role of a sophist.

The epoch of the latest stage of capitalism shows us that certain relations between capitalist associations grow up, *based* on the economic division of the world; while parallel to and in connection with it, certain relations grow up between political alliances, between states, on the basis of the territorial division of the world, of the struggle for colonies, of the "struggle for spheres of influence".

Chapter 6: Division of the World Among the Great Powers

In his book, on "the territorial development of the European colonies", A. Supan, [79] the geographer, gives the following brief summary of this development at the end of the nineteenth century:

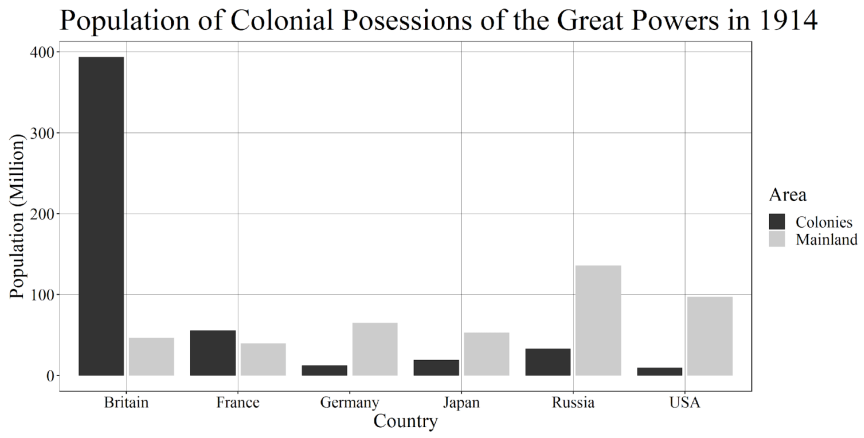


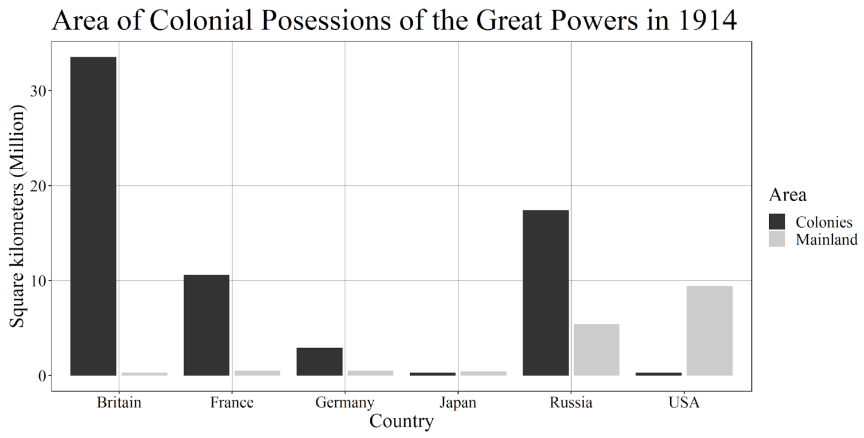
"The characteristic feature of this period," he concludes, "is, therefore, the division of Africa and Polynesia." As there are no unoccupied territories—that is, territories that do not belong to any state in Asia and America, it is necessary to amplify Supan's conclusion and say that the characteristic feature of the period under review is the final partitioning of the globe—final, not in the sense that *repartition* is impossible; on the contrary, repartitions are possible and inevitable—but in the sense that the colonial policy of the capitalist countries has *completed* the seizure of the unoccupied territories on our planet. For the first time the world is completely divided up, so that in the future *only* redivision is possible, i.e., territories can only pass from one "owner" to another, instead of passing as ownerless territory to an owner.

Hence, we are living in a peculiar epoch of world colonial policy, which is most closely connected with the "latest stage in the development of

capitalism", with finance capital. For this reason, it is essential first of all to deal in greater detail with the facts, in order to ascertain as exactly as possible what distinguishes this epoch from those preceding it, and what the present situation is. In the first place, two questions of fact arise here: is an intensification of colonial policy, a sharpening of the struggle for colonies, observed precisely in the epoch of finance capital? And how, in this respect, is the world divided at the present time?

The American writer, Morris, in his book on the history of colonization, [80] made an attempt to sum up the data on the colonial possessions of Great Britain, France and Germany during different periods of the nineteenth century. The following is a brief summary of the results he has obtained:





For Great Britain, the period of the enormous expansion of colonial conquests was between 1860 and 1880, and it was also very considerable in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century. For France and Germany this period falls precisely in these twenty years. We saw above that the development of premonopoly capitalism, of capitalism in which free competition was predominant, reached its limit in the 1860s and 1870s. We now see that it is *precisely after that period* that the tremendous "boom" in colonial conquests begins, and that the struggle for the territorial division of the world becomes extraordinarily sharp. It is beyond doubt, therefore, that capitalism's transition to the stage of monopoly capitalism, to finance capital, *is connected* with the intensification of the struggle for the partitioning of the world.

Hobson, in his work on imperialism, marks the years 1884-1900 as the epoch of intensified "expansion" of the chief European states. According to his estimate, Great Britain during these years acquired 3,700,000 square miles of territory with 57,000,000 inhabitants; France, 3,600,000 square miles with 36,500,000; Germany, 1,000,000 square miles with 14,700,000; Belgium, 900,000 square miles with 30,000,000; Portugal, 800,000 square miles with 9,000,000 inhabitants. The scramble for colonies by all the capitalist states at the end of the nineteenth century and particularly since the 1880s is a commonly known fact in the history of diplomacy and of foreign policy.

In the most flourishing period of free competition in Great Britain, i.e., between 1840 and 1860, the leading British bourgeois politicians were *opposed* to colonial policy and were of the opinion that the liberation of the colonies, their complete separation from Britain, was inevitable and desirable. M. Beer, in an article, "Modern British Imperialism", [81] published in 1898, shows that in 1852, Disraeli, a statesman who was generally inclined towards imperialism, declared: "The colonies are millstones round our necks." But at the end of the nineteenth century the British heroes of the hour were Cecil Rhodes and Joseph Chamberlain, who openly advocated imperialism and applied the imperialist policy in the most cynical manner!

It is not without interest to observe that even then these leading British bourgeois politicians saw the connection between what might be called the purely economic and the socio-political roots of modern imperialism. Chamberlain advocated imperialism as a "true, wise and economical policy", and pointed particularly to the German, American and Belgian competition which Great Britain was encountering in the world market. Salvation lies in monopoly, said the capitalists as they formed cartels, syndicates and trusts. Salvation lies in monopoly, echoed the political leaders of the bourgeoisie, hastening to appropriate the parts of the world not yet shared out. And Cecil Rhodes, we are informed by his intimate friend, the journalist Stead, expressed his imperialist views to him in 1895 in the following terms: "I was in the East End of London (a working-class quarter) yesterday and attended a meeting of the unemployed. I listened to the wild speeches, which were just a cry for 'bread! bread!' and on my way home I pondered over the scene and I became more than ever convinced of the importance of imperialism.... My cherished idea is a solution for the social problem, i.e., in order to save the 40,000,000 inhabitants of the United Kingdom from a bloody civil war, we colonial statesmen must acquire new lands to settle the surplus population, to provide new markets for the goods produced in the factories and mines. The Empire, as I have always said, is a bread and butter question. If you want to avoid civil war, you must become imperialists. [82]

That was said in 1895 by Cecil Rhodes, millionaire, a king of finance, the man who was mainly responsible for the Anglo-Boer War. True, his defense of imperialism is crude and cynical, but in substance it does not differ from the "theory" advocated by Messrs. Maslov, Südekum, Potresov, David, the founder of Russian Marxism and others. Cecil Rhodes was a somewhat more honest social-chauvinist....

To present as precise a picture as possible of the territorial division of the world and of the changes which have occurred during the last decades in this respect, I shall utilize the data furnished by Supan in the work already quoted on the colonial possessions of all the powers of the world. Supan takes the years 1876 and 1900; I shall take the year 1876—a year very aptly selected, for it is precisely by that time that the pre-monopolist stage of

development of West-European capitalism can be said to have been, in the main, completed—and the year 1914, and instead of Supan's figures I shall quote the more recent statistics of Hübner's *Geographical and Statistical Tables* . Supan gives figures only for colonies; I think it useful, in order to present a complete picture of the division of the world, to add brief data on non-colonial and semi-colonial countries, in which category I place Persia, China and Turkey: the first of these countries is already almost completely a colony, the second and third are becoming such.

We thus get the following result:

Colonial Posessions (in million sq. m. and inhabitants)

Year	Colonies				Metropolitan		Total	
	1876		1914		1914		1914	
	Area	Population	Area	Population	Area	Population	Area	Population
Great Britain	22.5	251.9	33.5	393.5	0.3	46.5	33.8	440.0
Russia	17.0	15.9	17.4	33.2	5.4	136.2	22.8	169.4
France	0.9	6.0	10.6	55.5	0.5	39.6	11.1	95.1
Germany	-	-	2.9	12.3	0.5	64.9	3.4	77.2
United States	-	-	0.3	9.7	9.4	97.0	9.7	106.7
Japan	-	-	0.3	19.2	0.4	53.0	0.7	72.2
Subtotal	40.4	273.8	65.0	523.4	16.5	437.2	81.5	960.6
Colonies of other powers (Belgium, Holland, etc.)							9.9	45.3
Semi-colonial countries (Persia, China, Turkey)							14.5	361.2
Other countries							28.0	289.9
Total World (area and pop.)							133.9	1,657.0

We clearly see from these figures how "complete" was the partition of the world at the turn of the twentieth century. After 1876 colonial possessions increased to enormous dimensions, by more than fifty percent, from 40,000,000 to 65,000,000 square kilometers for the six biggest powers; the increase amounts to 25,000,000 square kilometers, fifty percent more than the area of the metropolitan countries (16,500,000 square kilometers). In 1876 three powers had no colonies, and a fourth, France, had scarcely any. By 1914 these four powers had acquired colonies with an area of 14,100,000 square kilometers, i.e., about half as much again as the area of Europe, with a population of nearly 100,000,000. The unevenness in the rate of expansion of colonial possessions is very great. If, for instance, we compare France, Germany and Japan, which do not differ very much in area and population, we see that the first has acquired almost three times as

much colonial territory as the other two combined. In regard to finance capital, France, at the beginning of the period we are considering, was also, perhaps, several times richer than Germany and Japan put together. In addition to, and on the basis of, purely economic conditions, geographical and other conditions also affect the dimensions of colonial possessions. However strong the process of leveling the world, of leveling the economic and living conditions in different countries, may have been in the past decades as a result of the pressure of large-scale industry, exchange and finance capital, considerable differences still remain; and among the six countries mentioned we see, firstly, young capitalist countries (America, Germany, Japan) whose progress has been extraordinarily rapid; secondly, countries with an old capitalist development (France and Great Britain), whose progress lately has been much slower than that of the previously mentioned countries, and thirdly, a country most backward economically (Russia), where modern capitalist imperialism is enmeshed, so to speak, in a particularly close network of pre-capitalist relations.

Alongside the colonial possessions of the Great Powers, we have placed the small colonies of the small states, which are, so to speak, the next objects of a possible and probable "redivision" of colonies. These small states mostly retain their colonies only because the big powers are torn by conflicting interests, friction, etc., which prevent them from coming to an agreement on the division of the spoils. As to the "semi-colonial" states, they provide an example of the transitional forms which are to be found in all spheres of nature and society. Finance capital is such a great, such a decisive, you might say, force in all economic and in all international relations, that it is capable of subjecting, and actually does subject, to itself even states enjoying the fullest political independence; we shall shortly see examples of this. Of course, finance capital finds most "convenient", and derives the greatest profit from, a *form* of subjection which involves the loss of the political independence of the subjected countries and peoples. In this respect, the semi-colonial countries provide a typical example of the "middle stage". It is natural that the struggle for these semi dependent countries should have become particularly bitter in the epoch of finance capital, when the rest of the world has already been divided up.

Colonial policy and imperialism existed before the latest stage of capitalism, and even before capitalism. Rome, founded on slavery, pursued a colonial policy and practiced imperialism. But "general" disquisitions on imperialism, which ignore, or put into the background, the fundamental difference between socio-economic formations, inevitably turn into the most vapid banality or bragging, like the comparison: "Greater Rome and Greater Britain." [83] Even the capitalist colonial policy of *previous* stages of capitalism is essentially different from the colonial policy of finance capital.

The principal feature of the latest stage of capitalism is the domination of monopolist associations of big employers. These monopolies are most firmly established when *all* the sources of raw materials are captured by one group, and we have seen with what zeal the international capitalist associations exert every effort to deprive their rivals of all opportunity of competing, to buy up, for example, ironfields, oilfields, etc. Colonial possession alone gives the monopolies complete guarantee against all contingencies in the struggle against competitors, including the case of the adversary wanting to be protected by a law establishing a state monopoly. The more capitalism is developed, the more strongly the shortage of raw materials is felt, the more intense the competition and the hunt for sources of raw materials throughout the whole world, the more desperate the struggle for the acquisition of colonies.

"It may be asserted," writes Schilder, "although it may sound paradoxical to some, that in the more or less foreseeable future the growth of the urban and industrial population is more likely to be hindered by a shortage of raw materials for industry than by a shortage of food." For example, there is a growing shortage of timber—the price of which is steadily rising—of leather, and of raw materials for the textile industry. "Associations of manufacturers are making efforts to create an equilibrium between agriculture and industry in the whole of world economy; as an example of this we might mention the International Federation of Cotton Spinners' Associations in several of the most important industrial countries, founded

in 1904, and the European Federation of Flax Spinners' Associations, founded on the same model in 1910." [84]

Of course, the bourgeois reformists, and among them particularly the present-day adherents of Kautsky, try to belittle the importance of facts of this kind by arguing that raw materials "could be" obtained in the open market without a "costly and dangerous" colonial policy; and that the supply of raw materials "could be" increased enormously by "simply" improving conditions in agriculture in general. But such arguments become an apology for imperialism, an attempt to paint it in bright colors, because they ignore the principal feature of the latest stage of capitalism: monopolies. The free market is becoming more and more a thing of the past; monopolist syndicates and trusts are restricting it with every passing day, and "simply" improving conditions in agriculture means improving the conditions of the masses, raising wages and reducing profits. Where, except in the imagination of sentimental reformists, are there any trusts capable of concerning themselves with the condition of the masses instead of the conquest of colonies?

Finance capital is interested not only in the already discovered sources of raw materials but also in potential sources, because present-day technical development is extremely rapid, and land which is useless today may be improved tomorrow if new methods are devised (to this end a big bank can equip a special expedition of engineers, agricultural experts, etc.), and if large amounts of capital are invested. This also applies to prospecting for minerals, to new methods of processing up and utilizing raw materials, etc., etc. Hence, the inevitable striving of finance capital to enlarge its spheres of influence and even its actual territory. In the same way that the trusts capitalize their property at two or three times its value, taking into account its "potential" (and not actual) profits and the further results of monopoly, so finance capital in general strives to seize the largest possible amount of land of all kinds in all places, and by every means, taking into account potential sources of raw materials and fearing to be left behind in the fierce struggle for the last remnants of independent territory, or for the repartition of those territories that have been already divided.

The British capitalists are exerting every effort to develop cotton growing in *their* colony, Egypt (in 1904, out of 2,300,000 hectares of land under cultivation, 600,000, or more than one-fourth, were under cotton); the Russians are doing the same in *their* colony, Turkestan, because in this way they will be in a better position to defeat their foreign competitors, to monopolize the sources of raw materials and form a more economical and profitable textile trust in which *all* the processes of cotton production and manufacturing will be "combined" and concentrated in the hands of one set of owners.

The interests pursued in exporting capital also give an impetus to the conquest of colonies, for in the colonial market it is easier to employ monopoly methods (and sometimes they are the only methods that can be employed) to eliminate competition, to ensure supplies, to secure the necessary "connections", etc.

The non-economic superstructure which grows up on the basis of finance capital, its politics and its ideology, stimulates the striving for colonial conquest. "Finance capital does not want liberty, it wants domination," as Hilferding very truly says. And a French bourgeois writer, developing and supplementing, as it were, the ideas of Cecil Rhodes quoted above, [85] writes that social causes should be added to the economic causes of modern colonial policy: "Owing to the growing complexities of life and the difficulties which weigh not only on the masses of the workers, but also on the middle classes, 'impatience, irritation and hatred are accumulating in all the countries of the old civilization and are becoming a menace to public order; the energy which is being hurled out of the definite class channel must be given employment abroad in order to avert an explosion at home'." [86]

Since we are speaking of colonial policy in the epoch of capitalist imperialism, it must be observed that finance capital and its foreign policy, which is the struggle of the great powers for the economic and political division of the world, give rise to a number of *transitional* forms of state dependence. Not only are the two main groups of countries, those owning

colonies, and the colonies themselves, but also the diverse forms of dependent countries which, politically, are formally independent, but in fact, are enmeshed in the net of financial and diplomatic dependence, typical of this epoch. We have already referred to one form of dependence —the semi-colony. An example of another is provided by Argentina.

"South America, and especially Argentina," writes Schulze-Gaevernitz in his work on British imperialism, "is so dependent financially on London that it ought to be described as almost a British commercial colony." [87] Basing himself on the reports of the Austro-Hungarian Consul at Buenos Aires for 1909, Schilder estimated the amount of British capital invested in Argentina at 8,750 million francs. It is not difficult to imagine what strong connections British finance capital (and its faithful "friend", diplomacy) thereby acquires with the Argentine bourgeoisie, with the circles that control the whole of that country's economic and political life.

A somewhat different form of financial and diplomatic dependence, accompanied by political independence, is presented by Portugal. Portugal is an independent sovereign state, but actually, for more than two hundred years, since the war of the Spanish Succession (1701-14), it has been a British protectorate. Great Britain has protected Portugal and her colonies in order to fortify her own positions in the fight against her rivals, Spain and France. In return Great Britain has received commercial privileges, preferential conditions for importing goods and especially capital into Portugal and the Portuguese colonies, the right to use the ports and islands of Portugal, her telegraph cables, etc., etc. [88] Relations of this kind have always existed between big and little states, but in the epoch of capitalist imperialism they become a general system, they form part of the sum total of "divide the world" relations and become links in the chain of operations of world finance capital.

In order to finish with the question of the division of the world, I must make the following additional observation. This question was raised quite openly and definitely not only in American literature after the Spanish-American War, and in English literature after the Anglo-Boer War, at the very end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth; not only has

German literature, which has "most jealously" watched "British imperialism", systematically given its appraisal of this fact. This question has also been raised in French bourgeois literature as definitely and broadly as is thinkable from the bourgeois point of view. Let me quote Driault, the historian, who, in his book, *Political and Social Problems at the End of the Nineteenth Century* , in the chapter "The Great Powers and the Division of the World", wrote the following: "During the past few years, all the free territory of the globe, with the exception of China, has been occupied by the powers of Europe and North America. This has already brought about several conflicts and shifts of spheres of influence, and these foreshadow more terrible upheavals in the near future. For it is necessary to make haste. The nations which have not yet made provision for themselves run the risk of never receiving their share and never participating in the tremendous exploitation of the globe which will be one of the most essential features of the next century (i.e., the twentieth). That is why all Europe and America have lately been afflicted with the fever of colonial expansion, of 'imperialism', that most noteworthy feature of the end of the nineteenth century." And the author added: "In this partition of the world, in this furious hunt for the treasures and the big markets of the globe, the relative strength of the empires founded in this nineteenth century is totally out of proportion to the place occupied in Europe by the nations which founded them. The dominant powers in Europe, the arbiters of her destiny, are *not* equally preponderant in the whole world. And, as colonial might, the hope of controlling as yet unassessed wealth, will evidently react upon the relative strength of the European powers, the colonial question —"imperialism", if you will—which has already modified the political conditions of Europe itself, will modify them more and more." [89]

Chapter 7: Imperialism as a Special Stage of Capitalism

We must now try to sum up, to draw together the threads of what has been said above on the subject of imperialism. Imperialism emerged as the development and direct continuation of the fundamental characteristics of capitalism in general. But capitalism only became capitalist imperialism at a definite and very high stage of its development, when certain of its fundamental characteristics began to change into their opposites, when the features of the epoch of transition from capitalism to a higher social and economic system had taken shape and revealed themselves in all spheres. Economically, the main thing in this process is the displacement of capitalist free competition by capitalist monopoly. Free competition is the basic feature of capitalism, and of commodity production generally; monopoly is the exact opposite of free competition, but we have seen the latter being transformed into monopoly before our eyes, creating large-scale industry and forcing out small industry, replacing large-scale by still larger-scale industry, and carrying concentration of production and capital to the point where out of it has grown and is growing monopoly: cartels, syndicates and trusts, and merging with them, the capital of a dozen or so banks, which manipulate thousands of millions. At the same time the monopolies, which have grown out of free competition, do not eliminate the latter, but exist above it and alongside it, and thereby give rise to a number of very acute, intense antagonisms, frictions and conflicts. Monopoly is the transition from capitalism to a higher system.

If it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition of imperialism we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism. Such a definition would include what is most important, for, on the one hand, finance capital is the bank capital of a few very big monopolist banks, merged with the capital of the monopolist associations of industrialists; and, on the other hand, the division of the world is the transition from a colonial policy which has extended without hindrance to territories not seized by any

capitalist power, to a colonial policy of monopolist possession of the territory of the world, which has been completely divided up.

But very brief definitions, although convenient, for they sum up the main points, are nevertheless inadequate, since we have to deduce from them some especially important features of the phenomenon that has to be defined. And so, without forgetting the conditional and relative value of all definitions in general, which can never embrace all the concatenations of a phenomenon in its full development, we must give a *definition of imperialism that will include the following* ***five*** *of its basic features* :

(1) the concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life;
(2) the merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this "finance capital", of a financial oligarchy;
(3) the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance;
(4) the formation of international monopolist capitalist associations which share the world among themselves, and
(5) the territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed. Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun, in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed.
We shall see later that imperialism can and must be defined differently if we bear in mind not only the basic, purely economic concepts—to which the above definition is limited—but also the historical place of this stage of capitalism in relation to capitalism in general, or the relation between imperialism and the two main trends in the working-class movement. The thing to be noted at this point is that imperialism, as interpreted above, undoubtedly represents a special stage in the development of capitalism. To enable the reader to obtain the most well grounded idea of imperialism, I deliberately tried to quote as extensively as possible *bourgeois* economists who have to admit the particularly incontrovertible facts concerning the

latest stage of capitalist economy. With the same object in view, I have quoted detailed statistics which enable one to see to what degree bank capital, etc., has grown, in what precisely the transformation of quantity into quality, of developed capitalism into imperialism, was expressed. Needless to say, of course, all boundaries in nature and in society are conventional and changeable, and it would be absurd to argue, for example, about the particular year or decade in which imperialism "definitely" became established.

In the matter of defining imperialism, however, we have to enter into controversy, primarily, with Karl Kautsky, the principal Marxist theoretician of the epoch of the so-called Second International—that is, of the twenty-five years between 1889 and 1914. The fundamental ideas expressed in our definition of imperialism were very resolutely attacked by Kautsky in 1915, and even in November 1914, when he said that imperialism must not be regarded as a "phase" or stage of economy, but as a policy, a definite policy "preferred" by finance capital; that imperialism must not be "identified" with "present-day capitalism"; that if imperialism is to be understood to mean "all the phenomena of present-day capitalism"—cartels, protection, the domination of the financiers, and colonial policy—then the question as to whether imperialism is necessary to capitalism becomes reduced to the "flattest tautology", because, in that case, "imperialism is naturally a vital necessity for capitalism", and so on. The best way to present Kautsky's idea is to quote his own definition of imperialism, which is diametrically opposed to the substance of the ideas which I have set forth (for the objections coming from the camp of the German Marxists, who have been advocating similar ideas for many years already, have been long known to Kautsky as the objections of a definite trend in Marxism).

Kautsky's definition is as follows:

"Imperialism is a product of highly developed industrial capitalism. It consists in the striving of every industrial capitalist nation to bring under its control or to annex all large areas of *agrarian* [Kautsky's italics] territory, irrespective of what nations inhabit it." [90]

This definition is of no use at all because it one-sidedly, i.e., arbitrarily, singles out only the national question (although the latter is extremely important in itself as well as in its relation to imperialism), it arbitrarily and *inaccurately* connects this question *only* with industrial capital in the countries which annex other nations, and in an equally arbitrary and inaccurate manner pushes into the forefront the annexation of agrarian regions.

Imperialism is a striving for annexations—this is what the *political* part of Kautsky's definition amounts to. It is correct, but very incomplete, for politically, imperialism is, in general, a striving towards violence and reaction. For the moment, however, we are interested in the *economic* aspect of the question, which Kautsky *himself* introduced into his definition. The inaccuracies in Kautsky's definition are glaring. The characteristic feature of imperialism is not industrial *but* finance capital. It is not an accident that in France it was precisely the extraordinarily rapid development of *finance* capital, and the weakening of industrial capital, that from the eighties onwards gave rise to the extreme intensification of annexationist (colonial) policy. The characteristic feature of imperialism is precisely that it strives to annex *not only* agrarian territories, but even most highly industrialized regions (German appetite for Belgium; French appetite for Lorraine), because (1) the fact that the world is already partitioned obliges those contemplating a *redivision* to reach out for *every kind* of territory, and (2) an essential feature of imperialism is the rivalry between several great powers in the striving for hegemony, i.e., for the conquest of territory, not so much directly for themselves as to weaken the adversary and undermine *his* hegemony. (Belgium is particularly important for Germany as a base for operations against Britain; Britain needs Baghdad as a base for operations against Germany, etc.)

Kautsky refers especially—and repeatedly—to English writers who, he alleges, have given a purely political meaning to the word "imperialism" in the sense that he, Kautsky, understands it. We take up the work by the English writer Hobson, *Imperialism* , which appeared in 1902, and there we read:

"The new imperialism differs from the older, first, in substituting for the ambition of a single growing empire the theory and the practice of competing empires, each motivated by similar lusts of political aggrandizement and commercial gain; secondly, in the dominance of financial or investing over mercantile interests." [91]

We see that Kautsky is absolutely wrong in referring to English writers generally (unless he meant the vulgar English imperialists, or the avowed apologists for imperialism). We see that Kautsky, while claiming that he continues to advocate Marxism, as a matter of fact takes a step backward compared with the *social-liberal* Hobson, who *more correctly* takes into account two "historically concrete" (Kautsky's definition is a mockery of historical concreteness!) features of modern imperialism: (1) the competition between *several* imperialisms, and (2) the predominance of the financier over the merchant. If it is chiefly a question of the annexation of agrarian countries by industrial countries, then the role of the merchant is put in the forefront.

Kautsky's definition is not only wrong and un-Marxist. It serves as a basis for a whole system of views which signify a rupture with Marxist theory and Marxist practice all along the line. I shall refer to this later. The argument about words which Kautsky raises as to whether the latest stage of capitalism should be called imperialism or the stage of finance capital is not worth serious attention. Call it what you will, it makes no difference. The essence of the matter is that Kautsky detaches the politics of imperialism from its economics, speaks of annexations as being a policy "preferred" by finance capital, and opposes to it another bourgeois policy which, he alleges, is possible on this very same basis of finance capital. It follows, then, that monopolies in the economy are compatible with non-monopolistic, non-violent, non-annexationist methods in politics. It follows, then, that the territorial division of the world, which was completed during this very epoch of finance capital, and which constitutes the basis of the present peculiar forms of rivalry between the biggest capitalist states, is compatible with a non-imperialist policy. The result is a slurring-over and a blunting of the most profound contradictions of the latest stage of

capitalism, instead of an exposure of their depth; the result is bourgeois reformism instead of Marxism.

Kautsky enters into controversy with the German apologist of imperialism and annexations, Cunow, who clumsily and cynically argues that imperialism is present-day capitalism; the development of capitalism is inevitable and progressive; therefore imperialism is progressive; therefore, we should grovel before it and glorify it! This is something like the caricature of the Russian Marxists which the Narodniks drew in 1894-95. They argued: if the Marxists believe that capitalism is inevitable in Russia, that it is progressive, then they ought to open a tavern and begin to implant capitalism! Kautsky's reply to Cunow is as follows: imperialism is not present-day capitalism; it is only one of the forms of the policy of present-day capitalism. This policy we can and should fight, fight imperialism, annexations, etc.

The reply seems quite plausible, but in effect it is a more subtle and more disguised (and therefore more dangerous) advocacy of conciliation with imperialism, because a "fight" against the policy of the trusts and banks that does not affect the economic basis of the trusts and banks is mere bourgeois reformism and pacifism, the benevolent and innocent expression of pious wishes. Evasion of existing contradictions, forgetting the most important of them, instead of revealing their full depth—such is Kautsky's theory, which has nothing in common with Marxism. Naturally, such a "theory" can only serve the purpose of advocating unity with the Cunows!

"From the purely economic point of view," writes Kautsky, "it is not impossible that capitalism will yet go through a new phase, that of the extension of the policy of the cartels to foreign policy, the phase of ultra-imperialism," [92] i.e., of a superimperialism, of a union of the imperialisms of the whole world and not struggles among them, a phase when wars shall cease under capitalism, a phase of "the joint exploitation of the world by internationally united finance capital". [93]

We shall have to deal with this “theory of ultra-imperialism” later on in order to show in detail how decisively and completely it breaks with Marxism. At present, in keeping with the general plan of the present work, we must examine the exact economic data on this question. “From the purely economic point of view”, is “ultra-imperialism” possible, or is it ultra-nonsense?

If the purely economic point of view is meant to be a “pure” abstraction, then all that can be said reduces itself to the following proposition: development is proceeding towards monopolies, hence, towards a single world monopoly, towards a single world trust. This is indisputable, but it is also as completely meaningless as is the statement that “development is proceeding” towards the manufacture of foodstuffs in laboratories. In this sense the “theory” of ultra-imperialism is no less absurd than a “theory of ultra-agriculture” would be.

If, however, we are discussing the “purely economic” conditions of the epoch of finance capital as a historically concrete epoch which began at the turn of the twentieth century, then the best reply that one can make to the lifeless abstractions of “ultraimperialism” (which serve exclusively a most reactionary aim: that of diverting attention from the depth of *existing* antagonisms) is to contrast them with the concrete economic realities of the present-day world economy. Kautsky’s utterly meaningless talk about ultra-imperialism encourages, among other things, that profoundly mistaken idea which only brings grist to the mill of the apologists of imperialism, i.e., that the rule of finance capital *lessens* the unevenness and contradictions inherent in the world economy, whereas in reality it increases them.

R. Calwer, in his little book, *An Introduction to the World Economy* , [94] made an attempt to summarize the main, purely economic, data that enable one to obtain a concrete picture of the internal relations of the world economy at the turn of the twentieth century. He divides the world into five “main economic areas”, as follows: (1) Central Europe (the whole of Europe with the exception of Russia and Great Britain); (2) Great Britain; (3) Russia; (4) Eastern Asia; (5) America; he includes the colonies in the

"areas" of the states to which they belong and "leaves aside" a few countries not distributed according to areas, such as Persia, Afghanistan, and Arabia in Asia, Morocco and Abyssinia in Africa, etc.

Here is a brief summary of the economic data he quotes on these regions.

Development of Global Powers at the turn of the 20th century

	Area	Pop	Transport		Trade	Industry (million)		
Principal economic areas	Mill. sq. miles	Mill.	Railways (thou. Km)	Mertantile fleet (mill. tons)	Imports & Exports (bill. Marks)	Output (Tons)		Cotton spindles
						Coal	Pig iron	
Central Europe	27.6	388.0	204.0	8.0	41.0	251.0	15.00	26.0
Colonies	23.6	146.0						
Britain	28.9	398.0	140.0	11.0	25.0	249.0	9.00	51.0
Colonies	28.6	355.0						
Russia	22.0	131.0	63.0	1.0	3.0	16.0	3.00	7.0
Eastern Asia	12.0	389.0	8.0	1.0	2.0	8.0	0.02	2.0
America	30.0	148.0	379.0	6.0	14.0	245.0	14.00	19.0

We see three areas of highly developed capitalism (high development of means of transport, of trade and of industry): the Central European, the British and the American areas. Among these are three states which dominate the world: Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. Imperialist rivalry and the struggle between these countries have become extremely keen because Germany has only an insignificant area and few colonies; the creation of "Central Europe" is still a matter for the future, it is being born in the midst of a desperate struggle. For the moment the distinctive feature of the whole of Europe is political disunity. In the British and American areas, on the other hand, political concentration is very highly developed, but there is a vast disparity between the immense colonies of the one and the insignificant colonies of the other. In the colonies, however, capitalism is only beginning to develop. The struggle for South America is becoming more and more acute.

There are two areas where capitalism is little developed: Russia and Eastern Asia. In the former, the population is extremely sparse, in the latter it is extremely dense; in the former political concentration is high, in the latter it does not exist. The partitioning of China is only just beginning, and the struggle for it between Japan, the U.S., etc., is continually gaining in intensity.

Compare this reality—the vast diversity of economic and political conditions, the extreme disparity in the rate of development of the various countries, etc., and the violent struggles among the imperialist states—with Kautsky's silly little fable about "peaceful" ultra-imperialism. Is not this the reactionary attempt of a frightened philistine to hide from stern reality? Are not the international cartels which Kautsky imagines are the embryos of "ultra-imperialism" (in the same way as one "can" describe the manufacture of tablets in a laboratory as ultra-agriculture in embryo) an example of the division *and the redivision* of the world, the transition from peaceful division to non-peaceful division and vice versa? Is not American and other finance capital, which divided the whole world peacefully with Germany's participation in, for example, the international rail syndicate, or in the international mercantile shipping trust, now engaged in *redividing* the world on the basis of a new relation of forces that is being changed by methods *anything but* peaceful?

Finance capital and the trusts do not diminish but increase the differences in the rate of growth of the various parts of the world economy. Once the relation of forces is changed, what other solution of the contradictions can be found *under capitalism* than that of *force* ? Railway statistics [95] provide remarkably exact data on the different rates of growth of capitalism and finance capital in the world economy. In the last decades of imperialist development, the total length of railways has changed as follows:

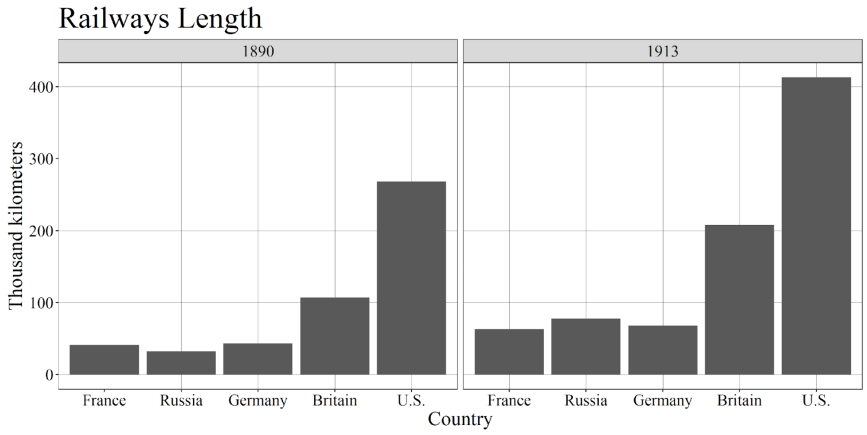
Railways (thousand kilometers)

Railway built in:	1890		1913		Increase	
Europe	224.0		346.0		122.0	
U.S.	268.0		411.0		143.0	
All Colonies	82.0		210.0		128.0	
Semi & fully independent states of Asia and America	43.0	125.0	137.0	347.0	94.0	222.0
Total	617.0		1,104.0		487.0	

Thus, the development of railways has been most rapid in the colonies and in the independent (and semi-independent) states of Asia and America.

Here, as we know, the finance capital of the four or five biggest capitalist states holds undisputed sway. Two hundred thousand kilometers of new railways in the colonies and in the other countries of Asia and America represent a capital of more than 40,000 million marks newly invested on particularly advantageous terms, with special guarantees of a good return and with profitable orders for steel works, etc., etc.

Capitalism is growing with the greatest rapidity in the colonies and in overseas countries. Among the latter, new imperialist powers are emerging (e.g., Japan). The struggle among the world's imperialisms is becoming more acute. The tribute levied by finance capital on the most profitable colonial and overseas enterprises is increasing. In the division of this "booty", an exceptionally large part goes to countries which do not always stand at the top of the list in the rapidity of the development of their productive forces. In the case of the biggest countries, together with their colonies, the total length of railways was as follows:



Thus, about 80 percent of the total existing railways are concentrated in the hands of the five biggest powers. But the concentration of the *ownership* of these railways, the concentration of finance capital, is immeasurably greater since the French and British millionaires, for example, own an enormous amount of shares and bonds in American, Russian and other railways.

Thanks to her colonies, Great Britain has increased the length of "her" railways by 100,000 kilometers, four times as much as Germany. And yet, it

is well known that the development of productive forces in Germany, and especially the development of the coal and iron industries, has been incomparably more rapid during this period than in Britain—not to speak of France and Russia. In 1892, Germany produced 4,900,000 tons of pig-iron and Great Britain produced 6,800,000 tons; in 1912, Germany produced 17,600,000 tons and Great Britain, 9,000,000 tons. Germany, therefore, had an overwhelming superiority over Britain in this respect. [96] The question is: what means other than war could there be *under capitalism* to overcome the disparity between the development of productive forces and the accumulation of capital on the one side, and the division of colonies and spheres of influence for finance capital on the other?

Chapter 8: Parasitism and Decay of Capitalism

We now have to examine yet another significant aspect of imperialism to which most of the discussions on the subject usually attach insufficient importance. One of the shortcomings of the Marxist Hilferding is that on this point he has taken a step backward compared with the non-Marxist Hobson. I refer to parasitism, which is characteristic of imperialism.

As we have seen, the deepest economic foundation of imperialism is monopoly. This is capitalist monopoly, i.e., monopoly which has grown out of capitalism and which exists in the general environment of capitalism, commodity production and competition, in permanent and insoluble contradiction to this general environment. Nevertheless, like all monopoly, it inevitably engenders a tendency of stagnation and decay. Since monopoly prices are established, even temporarily, the motive cause of technical and, consequently, of all other progress disappears to a certain extent and, further, the economic possibility arises of deliberately retarding technical progress. For instance, in America, a certain Owens invented a machine which revolutionized the manufacture of bottles. The German bottle-manufacturing cartel purchased Owens's patent, but pigeon-holed it, refrained from utilizing it. Certainly, monopoly under capitalism can never completely, and for a very long period of time, eliminate competition in the world market (and this, by the by, is one of the reasons why the theory of ultra-imperialism is so absurd). Certainly, the possibility of reducing the cost of production and increasing profits by introducing technical improvements operates in the direction of change. But the tendency to stagnation and decay, which is characteristic of monopoly, continues to operate, and in some branches of industry, in some countries, for certain periods of time, it gains the upper hand.

The monopoly ownership of very extensive, rich or well situated colonies operates in the same direction.

Further, imperialism is an immense accumulation of money capital in a few countries, amounting, as we have seen, to 100,000-50,000 million francs in securities. Hence the extraordinary growth of a class, or rather, of a stratum of rentiers, i.e., people who live by "clipping coupons", who take no part in any enterprise whatsoever, whose profession is idleness. The export of capital, one of the most essential economic bases of imperialism, still more completely isolates the rentiers from production and sets the seal of parasitism on the whole country that lives by exploiting the labor of several overseas countries and colonies.

"In 1893," writes Hobson, "the British capital invested abroad represented about 15 percent of the total wealth of the United Kingdom." [97] Let me remind the reader that by 1915 this capital had increased about two and a half times. "Aggressive imperialism," says Hobson further on, "which costs the tax-payer so dear, which is of so little value to the manufacturer and trader ... is a source of great gain to the investor.... The annual income Great Britain derives from commissions in her whole foreign and colonial trade, import and export, is estimated by Sir R.Giffen at £18,000,000 (nearly 170 million rubles] for 1899, taken at 2.5 percent, upon a turnover of £800,000,000." Great as this sum is, it cannot explain the aggressive imperialism of Great Britain, which is explained by the income of £90 million to £100 million from "invested" capital, the income of the rentiers.

The income of the rentiers is five *times* greater than the income obtained from the foreign trade of the biggest "trading" country in the world! This is the essence of imperialism and imperialist parasitism.

For that reason the term "rentier state" (Rentnerstaat), or usurer state, is coming into common use in the economic literature that deals with imperialism. The world has become divided into a handful of usurer states and a vast majority of debtor states. "At the top of the list of foreign investments," says Schulze-Gaevernitz, "are those placed in politically dependent or allied countries: Great Britain grants loans to Egypt, Japan, China and South America. Her navy plays here, the part of bailiff in case of necessity. Great Britain's political power protects her from the indignation

of her debtors." [98] Sartorius von Waltershausen in his book, *The National Economic System of Capital Investments Abroad,* cites Holland as the model "rentier state" and points out that Great Britain and France are now becoming such. [99] Schilder is of the opinion that five industrial states have become "definitely pronounced creditor countries": Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium and Switzerland. He does not include Holland in this list simply because she is "industrially little developed". [100] The United States is a creditor only of the American countries.

"Great Britain," says Schulze-Gaevernitz, "is gradually transforming from an industrial into a creditor state. Notwithstanding the absolute increase in industrial output and the export of manufactured goods, there is an increase in the relative importance of income from interest and dividends, issues of securities, commissions and speculation in the whole of the national economy. In my opinion it is precisely this that forms the economic basis of imperialist ascendancy. The creditor is more firmly attached to the debtor than the seller is to the buyer. [101] In regard to Germany, A. Lansburgh, the publisher of the Berlin *Die Bank,* in 1911, in an article entitled "Germany—a Rentier State", wrote the following: "People in Germany are ready to sneer at the yearning to become rentiers that is observed in France. But they forget that as far as the bourgeoisie is concerned the situation in Germany is becoming more and more like that in France." [102]

The rentier state is a state of parasitic, decaying capitalism, and this circumstance cannot fail to influence all the socio-political conditions of the countries concerned, in general, and the two fundamental trends in the working-class movement, in particular. To demonstrate this in the clearest possible manner let me quote Hobson, who is a most reliable witness, since he cannot be suspected of leaning towards Marxist orthodoxy; on the other hand, he is an Englishman who is very well acquainted with the situation in the country which is richest in colonies, in finance capital, and in imperialist experience.

With the Anglo-Boer War fresh in his mind, Hobson describes the connection between imperialism and the interests of the "financiers", their

growing profits from contracts, supplies, etc., and writes: “While the directors of this definitely parasitic policy are capitalists, the same motives appeal to special classes of the workers. In many towns most important trades are dependent upon government employment or contracts; the imperialism of the metal and shipbuilding centers is attributable in no small degree to this fact.” Two sets of circumstances, in this writer’s opinion, have weakened the old empires: (1) “economic parasitism”, and (2) the formation of armies recruited from subject peoples. “There is first the habit of economic parasitism, by which the ruling state has used its provinces, colonies, and dependencies in order to enrich its ruling class and to bribe its lower classes into acquiescence.” And I shall add that the economic possibility of such bribery, whatever its form may be, requires high monopolist profits.

As for the second circumstance, Hobson writes: “One of the strangest symptoms of the blindness of imperialism is the reckless indifference with which Great Britain, France and other imperial nations are embarking on this perilous dependence. Great Britain has gone farthest. Most of the fighting by which we have won our Indian Empire has been done by natives; in India, as more recently in Egypt, great standing armies are placed under British commanders; almost all the fighting associated with our African dominions, except in the southern part, has been done for us by natives.”

Hobson gives the following economic appraisal of the prospect of the partitioning of China: “The greater part of Western Europe might then assume the appearance and character already exhibited by tracts of country in the South of England, in the Riviera and in the tourist-ridden or residential parts of Italy and Switzerland, little clusters of wealthy aristocrats drawing dividends and pensions from the Far East, with a somewhat larger group of professional retainers and tradesmen and a larger body of personal servants and workers in the transport trade and in the final stages of production of the more perishable goods; all the main arterial industries would have disappeared, the staple foods and manufactures flowing in as tribute from Asia and Africa. . . . We have foreshadowed the possibility of even a larger alliance of Western states, a European federation

of great powers which, so far from forwarding the cause of world civilization, might introduce the gigantic peril of a Western parasitism, a group of advanced industrial nations, whose upper classes drew vast tribute from Asia and Africa, with which they supported great tame masses of retainers, no longer engaged in the staple industries of agriculture and manufacture, but kept in the performance of personal or minor industrial services under the control of a new financial aristocracy. Let those who would scout such a theory (it would be better to say: prospect) as undeserving of consideration examine the economic and social condition of districts in Southern England today which are already reduced to this condition, and reflect upon the vast extension of such a system which might be rendered feasible by the subjection of China to the economic control of similar groups of financiers, investors, and political and business officials, draining the greatest potential reservoir of profit the world has ever known, in order to consume it in Europe. The situation is far too complex, the play of world forces far too incalculable, to render this or any other single interpretation of the future very probable; but the influences which govern the imperialism of Western Europe today are moving in this direction, and, unless counteracted or diverted, make towards some such consummation." [103]

The author is quite right: if the forces of imperialism had not been counteracted they would have led precisely to what he has described. The significance of a "United States of Europe" in the present imperialist situation is correctly appraised. He should have added, however, that, also *within* the working-class movement, the opportunists, who are for the moment victorious in most countries, are "working" systematically and undeviatingly in this very direction. Imperialism, which means the partitioning of the world, and the exploitation of other countries besides China, which means high monopoly profits for a handful of very rich countries, makes it economically possible to bribe the upper strata of the proletariat, and thereby fosters, gives shape to, and strengthens opportunism. We must not, however, lose sight of the forces which counteract imperialism in general, and opportunism in particular, and which, naturally, the social-liberal Hobson is unable to perceive.

The German opportunist, Gerhard Hildebrand, who was once expelled from the Party for defending imperialism, and who could today be a leader of the so-called "Social-Democratic" Party of Germany, supplements Hobson well by his advocacy of a "United States of Western Europe" (without Russia) for the purpose of "joint" action ... against the African Negroes, against the "great Islamic movement", for the maintenance of a "powerful army and navy", against a "Sino-Japanese coalition", [104] etc.

The description of "British imperialism" in Schulze-Gaevernitz's book reveals the same parasitical traits. The national income of Great Britain approximately doubled from 1865 to 1898, while the income "from abroad" increased *ninefold* in the same period. While the "merit" of imperialism is that it "trains the Negro to habits of industry" (you cannot manage without coercion ...), the "danger" of imperialism lies in that "Europe will shift the burden of physical toil—first agricultural and mining, then the rougher work in industry—on to the colored races, and itself be content with the role of rentier, and in this way, perhaps, pave the way for the economic, and later, the political emancipation of the colored races".

An increasing proportion of land in England is being taken out of cultivation and used for sport, for the diversion of the rich. As far as Scotland—the most aristocratic place for hunting and other sports—is concerned, it is said that "it lives on its past and on Mr. Carnegie" (the American multimillionaire). On horse racing and fox hunting alone England annually spends £14,000,000 (nearly 130 million rubles). The number of rentiers in England is about one million. The percentage of the productively employed population to the total population is declining:

Population and Workers in England (mill.)

Year	England and Wales Population	Workers in basic industries	Percent of total population
1851	17.9	4.1	23%
1901	32.5	4.9	15%

And in speaking of the British working class the bourgeois student of "British imperialism at the beginning of the twentieth century" is obliged to distinguish systematically between the " *upper stratum* " of the workers and the " *lower stratum of the proletariat proper* ". The upper stratum furnishes the bulk of the membership of co-operatives, of trade unions, of sporting clubs and of numerous religious sects. To this level is adapted the electoral system, which in Great Britain is still " *sufficiently restricted to exclude the lower stratum of the proletariat proper* "! In order to present the condition of the British working class in a rosy light, only this upper stratum—which constitutes a *minority of* the proletariat—is usually spoken of. For instance, "the problem of unemployment is mainly a London problem and that of the lower proletarian stratum, *to which the politicians attach little importance* ..." [105] He should have said: to which the bourgeois politicians and the "socialist" opportunists attach little importance.

One of the special features of imperialism connected with the facts I am describing, is the decline in emigration from imperialist countries and the increase in immigration into these countries from the more backward countries where lower wages are paid. As Hobson observes, emigration from Great Britain has been declining since 1884. In that year the number of emigrants was 242,000, while in 1900, the number was 169,000. Emigration from Germany reached the highest point between 1881 and 1890, with a total of 1,453,000 emigrants. In the course of the following two decades, it fell to 544,000 and to 341,000. On the other hand, there was an increase in the number of workers entering Germany from Austria, Italy, Russia and other countries. According to the 1907 census, there were 1,342,294 foreigners in Germany, of whom 440,800 were industrial workers and 257,329 agricultural workers. [106] In France, the workers employed in the mining industry are, "in great part", foreigners: Poles, Italians and Spaniards. [107] In the United States, immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe are engaged in the most poorly paid jobs, while American workers provide the highest percentage of overseers or of the better-paid workers. [108] Imperialism has the tendency to create privileged sections also among the workers, and to detach them from the broad masses of the proletariat.

It must be observed that in Great Britain the tendency of imperialism to split the workers, to strengthen opportunism among them and to cause temporary decay in the working-class movement, revealed itself much earlier than the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries; for two important distinguishing features of imperialism were already observed in Great Britain in the middle of the nineteenth century—vast colonial possessions and a monopolist position in the world market. Marx and Engels traced this connection between opportunism in the working-class movement and the imperialist features of British capitalism systematically, during the course of several decades. For example, on October 7, 1858, Engels wrote to Marx: "The English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois, so that this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat *alongside* the bourgeoisie. For a nation which exploits the whole world this is of course to a certain extent justifiable." Almost a quarter of a century later, in a letter dated August 11, 1881, Engels speaks of the "worst English trade unions which allow themselves to be led by men sold to, or at least paid by, the middle class". In a letter to Kautsky, dated September 12, 1882, Engels wrote: "You ask me what the English workers think about colonial policy. Well, exactly the same as they think about politics in general. There is no workers' party here, there are only Conservatives and Liberal-Radicals, and the workers gaily share the feast of England's monopoly of the world market and the colonies." [109] (Engels expressed similar ideas in the press in his preface to the second edition of *The Condition of the Working Class in England,* which appeared in 1892.)

This clearly shows the causes and effects. The causes are: (1) exploitation of the whole world by this country; (2) its monopolist position in the world market; (3) its colonial monopoly. The effects are: (1) a section of the British proletariat becomes bourgeois; (2) a section of the proletariat allows itself to be led by men bought by, or at least paid by, the bourgeoisie. The imperialism of the beginning of the twentieth century completed the division of the world among a handful of states, each of which today exploits (in the sense of drawing superprofits from) a part of the "whole world" only a little smaller than that which England exploited in 1858; each

of them occupies a monopolist position in the world market thanks to trusts, cartels, finance capital and creditor and debtor relations; each of them enjoys to some degree a colonial monopoly (we have seen that out of the total of *75,000,000* sq. km., which comprise the *whole* colonial world, *65,000,000* sq. km., or 86 percent, belong to six powers; *61,000,000* sq. km., or 81 percent, belong to three powers).

The distinctive feature of the present situation is the prevalence of such economic and political conditions that are bound to increase the irreconcilability between opportunism and the general and vital interests of the working-class movement: imperialism has grown from an embryo into the predominant system; capitalist monopolies occupy first place in economics and politics; the division of the world has been completed; on the other hand, instead of the undivided monopoly of Great Britain, we see a few imperialist powers contending for the right to share in this monopoly, and this struggle is characteristic of the whole period of the early twentieth century. Opportunism cannot now be completely triumphant in the working-class movement of one country for decades as it was in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century; but in a number of countries it has grown ripe, overripe, and rotten, and has become completely merged with bourgeois policy in the form of "social-chauvinism". [110]

Chapter 9: Critique of Imperialism

By the critique of imperialism, in the broad sense of the term, we mean the attitude of the different classes of society towards imperialist policy in connection with their general ideology.

The enormous dimensions of finance capital concentrated in a few hands and creating an extraordinarily dense and widespread network of relationships and connections which subordinates not only the small and medium, but also the very small capitalists and small masters, on the one hand, and the increasingly intense struggle waged against other national state groups of financiers for the division of the world and domination over other countries, on the other hand, cause the propertied classes to go over entirely to the side of imperialism. “General” enthusiasm over the prospects of imperialism, furious defense of it and painting it in the brightest colors—such are the signs of the times. Imperialist ideology also penetrates the working class. No Chinese Wall separates it from the other classes. The leaders of the present-day, so-called, “Social-Democratic” Party of Germany are justly called “social-imperialists”, that is, socialists in words and imperialists in deeds; but as early as 1902, Hobson noted the existence in Britain of “Fabian imperialists” who belonged to the opportunist Fabian Society.

Bourgeois scholars and publicists usually come out in defense of imperialism in a somewhat veiled form; they obscure its complete, domination and its deep-going roots, strive to push specific and secondary details into the forefront and do their very best to distract attention from essentials by means of absolutely ridiculous schemes for “reform”, such as police supervision of the trusts or banks, etc. Cynical and frank imperialists who are bold enough to admit the absurdity of the idea of reforming the fundamental characteristics of imperialism are a rarer phenomenon.

Here is an example. The German imperialists attempt, in the magazine *Archives of World Economy* , to follow the national emancipation movements in the colonies, particularly, of course, in colonies other than those belonging to Germany. They note the unrest and the protest movements in India, the movement in Natal (South Africa), in the Dutch East Indies, etc. One of them, commenting on an English report of a conference held on June 28-30, 1910, of representatives of various subject nations and races, of peoples of Asia, Africa and Europe who are under foreign rule, writes as follows in appraising the speeches delivered at this conference: "We are told that we must fight imperialism; that the ruling states should recognise the right of subject peoples to independence; that an international tribunal should supervise the fulfillment of treaties concluded between the great powers and weak peoples. Further than the expression of these pious wishes they do not go. We see no trace of understanding of the fact that imperialism is inseparably bound up with capitalism in its present form and that, therefore [!!], an open struggle against imperialism would be hopeless, unless, perhaps, the fight were to be confined to protests against certain of its especially abhorrent excesses." [111] Since the reform of the basis of imperialism is a deception, a "pious wish", since the bourgeois representatives of the oppressed nations go no "further" forward, the bourgeois representative of an oppressing nation goes "further" *backward* , to servility towards imperialism under cover of the claim to be "scientific". That is also "logic"!

The questions as to whether it is possible to reform the basis of imperialism, whether to go forward to the further intensification and deepening of the antagonisms which it engenders. or backward, towards allaying these antagonisms, are fundamental questions in the critique of imperialism. Since the specific political features of imperialism are reaction everywhere and increased national oppression due to the oppression of the financial oligarchy and the elimination of free competition, a petty-bourgeois-democratic opposition to imperialism arose at the beginning of the twentieth century in nearly all imperialist countries. Kautsky not only did not trouble to oppose, was not only unable to oppose this petty-bourgeois reformist opposition, which is really reactionary in its economic basis, but became

merged with it in practice, and this is precisely where Kautsky and the broad international Kautskian trend deserted Marxism.

In the United States, the imperialist war waged against Spain in 1898 stirred up the opposition of the "anti-imperialists", the last of the Mohicans of bourgeois democracy who declared this war to be "criminal", regarded the annexation of foreign territories as a violation of the Constitution, declared that the treatment of Aguinaldo, leader of the Filipinos (the Americans promised him the independence of his country, but later landed troops and annexed it), was "jingo treachery", and quoted the words of Lincoln: "When the white man governs himself, that is self-government; but when he governs himself and also governs others, it is no longer self-government; it is despotism." [112] But as long, as all this criticism shrank from recognising the inseverable bond between imperialism and the trusts, and, therefore, between imperialism and the foundations of capitalism, while it shrank from joining the forces engendered by large-scale capitalism and its development-it remained a "pious wish".

This is also the main attitude taken by Hobson in his critique of imperialism. Hobson anticipated Kautsky in protesting against the "inevitability of imperialism" argument, and in urging the necessity of "increasing the consuming capacity" of the people (under capitalism!). The petty-bourgeois point of view in the critique of imperialism, the omnipotence of the banks, the financial oligarchy, etc., is adopted by the authors I have often quoted, such as Agahd, A. Lansburgh, L. Eschwege, and among the French writers Victor Berard, author of a superficial book entitled *England and Imperialism* which appeared in 1900. All these authors, who make no claim to be Marxists, contrast imperialism with free competition and democracy, condemn the Baghdad railway scheme, which is leading to conflicts and war, utter "pious wishes" for peace, etc. This applies also to the compiler of international stock and share issue statistics, A. Neymarck, who, after calculating the thousands of millions of francs representing "international" securities, exclaimed in 1912: "Is it possible to believe that peace may be disturbed ... that, in the face of these enormous figures, anyone would risk starting a war?" [113]

Such simple-mindedness on the part of the bourgeois economists is not surprising; moreover, *it is in their interest* to pretend to be so naive and to talk "seriously" about peace under imperialism. But what remains of Kautsky's Marxism, when, in 1914, 1915 and 1916, he takes up the same bourgeois-reformist point of view and affirms that "everybody is agreed" (imperialists, pseudo- socialists and social-pacifists) on the matter of peace? Instead of an analysis of imperialism and an exposure of the depths of its contradictions, we have nothing but a reformist "pious wish" to wave them aside, to evade them.

Here is a sample of Kautsky's economic criticism of imperialism. He takes the statistics of the British export and import trade with Egypt for 1872 and 1912; it seems that this export and import trade has grown more slowly than British foreign trade as a whole. From this Kautsky concludes that "we have no reason to suppose that without military occupation the growth of British trade with Egypt would have been less, simply as a result of the mere operation of economic factors". "The urge of capital to expand ... can be best promoted, not by the violent methods of imperialism, but by peaceful democracy." [114]

This argument of Kautsky's, which is repeated in every key by his Russian armor-bearer (and Russian shielder of the social-chauvinists), Mr. Spectator, [11] constitutes the basis of Kautskian critique of imperialism, and that is why we must deal with it in greater detail. We will begin with a quotation from Hilferding, whose conclusions Kautsky on many occasions, and notably in April 1915, has declared to have been "unanimously adopted by all socialist theoreticians".

"It is not the business of the proletariat," writes Hilferding "to contrast the more progressive capitalist policy with that of the now bygone era of free trade and of hostility towards the state. The reply of the proletariat to the economic policy of finance capital, to imperialism, cannot be free trade, but socialism. The aim of proletarian policy cannot today be the ideal of restoring free competition—which has now become a reactionary ideal—

but the complete elimination of competition by the abolition of capitalism." [115]

Kautsky broke with Marxism by advocating in the epoch of finance capital a "reactionary ideal", "peaceful democracy", "the mere operation of economic factors", for *objectively* this ideal drags us back from monopoly to non-monopoly capitalism, and is a reformist swindle.

Trade with Egypt (or with any other colony or semi-colony) "would have grown more" *without* military occupation, without imperialism, and without finance capital. What does this mean? That capitalism would have developed more rapidly if free competition had not been restricted by monopolies in general, or by the "connections", yoke (i.e., also the monopoly) of finance capital, or by the monopolist possession of colonies by certain countries?

Kautsky's argument can have no other meaning; and *this* "meaning" is meaningless. Let us assume that free competition, without any sort of monopoly, would have developed capitalism and trade more rapidly. But the more rapidly trade and capitalism develop, the greater is the concentration of production and capital which *gives rise* to monopoly. And monopolies have *already* arisen—precisely out of free competition! Even if monopolies have now begun to retard progress, it is not an argument in favour of free competition, which has become impossible after it has given rise to monopoly.

Whichever way one turns Kautsky's argument, one will find nothing in it except reaction and bourgeois reformism.

Even if we correct this argument and say, as Spectator says, that the trade of the colonies with Britain is now developing more slowly than their trade with other countries, it does not save Kautsky; for it *is also* monopoly, *also* imperialism that is beating Great Britain, only it is the monopoly and imperialism of another country (America, Germany). It is known that the cartels have given rise to a new and peculiar form of protective tariffs, i.e.,

goods suitable for export are protected (Engels noted this in Vol. III of *Capital*). It is known, too, that the cartels add finance capital have a system peculiar to themselves, that of "exporting goods at cut-rate prices", or "dumping", as the English call it: within a given country the cartel sells its goods at high monopoly prices, but sells them abroad at a much lower price to undercut the competitor, to enlarge its own production to the utmost, etc. If Germany's trade with the British colonies is developing more rapidly than Great Britain's, it only proves that German imperialism is younger, stronger and better organized than British imperialism, is superior to it; but it by no means proves the "superiority" of free trade, for it is not a fight between free trade and protection and colonial dependence, but between two rival imperialisms, two monopolies, two groups of finance capital. The superiority of German imperialism over British imperialism is more potent than the wall of colonial frontiers or of protective tariffs: to use this as an "argument" in *favor* of free trade and "peaceful democracy" is banal, it means forgetting the essential features and characteristics of imperialism, substituting petty-bourgeois reformism for Marxism.

It is interesting to note that even the bourgeois economist, A. Lansburgh, whose criticism of imperialism is as petty-bourgeois as Kautsky's, nevertheless got closer to a more scientific study of trade statistics. He did not compare one single country, chosen at random, and one single colony with the other countries; he examined the export trade of an imperialist country: (1) with countries which are financially dependent upon it, and borrow money from it; and (2) with countries which are financially independent. He obtained the following results:

Export trade of Germany (mill. marks)

	Country	1889	1908	Percent Change
To countries financially dependent on Germany	Romania	48.2	70.8	46.9%
	Portugal	19	32.8	72.6%
	Argentina	60.7	147	142.2%
	Brazil	48.7	84.5	73.5%
	Chile	28.3	52.4	85.2%
	Turkey	29.9	64	114.0%
	Total (dependent)	234.8	451.5	92.3%

Export trade of Germany (mill. marks)

	Country	1889	1908	Percent Change
To countries financially independent of Germany	Great Britain	651.8	997.4	53.0%
	France	210.2	437.9	108.3%
	Belgium	137.2	322.8	135.3%
	Switzerland	177.4	401.1	126.1%
	Australia	21.2	64.5	204.2%
	Dutch East Indies	8.8	40.7	362.5%
	Total (independent)	1206.6	2264.4	87.7%

Lansburgh did not draw *conclusions* and therefore, strangely enough, failed to observe that if the figures prove anything at all, they prove that *he is wrong,* for the exports to countries financially dependent on Germany have grown *more rapidly,* if only slightly, than exports to the countries which are financially independent. (I emphasize the "if", for Lansburgh's figures are far from complete.)

Tracing the connection between exports and loans, Lansburgh writes:

"In 1890-91, a Romanian loan was floated through the German banks, which had already in previous years made advances on this loan. It was used chiefly to purchase railway materials in Germany. In 1891, German exports to Romania amounted to 55 million marks. The following year they dropped to 39.4 million marks and, with fluctuations, to 25.4 million in 1900. Only in very recent years have they regained the level of 1891, thanks to two new loans.

"German exports to Portugal rose, following the loans of 1888- to 21,100,000 (1890); then, in the two following years, they dropped to 16,200,000 and 7,400,000, and regained their former level only in 1903.

"The figures of German trade with Argentina are still more striking. Loans were floated in 1888 and 1890; German exports to Argentina reached 60,700,000 marks (1889). Two years later they amounted to only

18,600,000 marks, less than one-third of the previous figure. It was not until 1901 that they regained and surpassed the level of 1889, and then only as a result of new loans floated by the state and by municipalities, with advances to build power stations, and with other credit operations.

"Exports to Chile, as a consequence of the loan of 1889, rose to 45,200,000 marks (in 1892), and a year later dropped to 22,500,000 marks. A new Chilean loan floated by the German banks in 1906 was followed by a rise of exports to 84,700,000 marks in 1907, only to fall again to 52,400,000 marks in 1908." [116]

From these facts Lansburgh draws the amusing petty-bourgeois moral of how unstable and irregular export trade is when it is bound up with loans, how bad it is to invest capital abroad instead of "naturally" and "harmoniously" developing home industry, how "costly" are the millions in bakshish that Krupp has to pay in floating foreign loans, etc. But the facts tell us clearly: the increase in exports is connected with just *these* swindling tricks of finance capital, which is not concerned with bourgeois morality, but with skinning the ox twice—first, it pockets the profits from the loan; then it pockets other profits from the *same* loan which the borrower uses to make purchases from Krupp, or to purchase railway material from the Steel Syndicate, etc.

I repeat that I do not by any means consider Lansburgh's figures to be perfect; but I had to quote them because they are more scientific than Kautsky's and Spectator's and because Lansburgh showed the correct way to approach the question. In discussing the significance of finance capital in regard to exports, etc., one must be able to single out the connection of exports especially and solely with the tricks of the financiers, especially and solely with the sale of goods by cartels, etc. Simply to compare colonies with non-colonies, one imperialism with another imperialism, one semi-colony or colony (Egypt) with all other countries, is to evade and to obscure the very *essence* of the question.

Kautsky's theoretical critique of imperialism has nothing in common with Marxism and serves only as a preamble to propaganda for peace and unity with the opportunists and the social-chauvinists, precisely for the reason that it evades and obscures the very profound and fundamental contradictions of imperialism: the contradictions between monopoly and free competition which exists side by side with it, between the gigantic "operations" (and gigantic profits) of finance capital and "honest" trade in the free market, the contradiction between cartels and trusts, on the one hand, and non-cartelized industry, on the other, etc.

The notorious theory of "ultra-imperialism", invented by Kautsky, is just as reactionary. Compare his arguments on this subject in 1915, with Hobson's arguments in 1902.

Kautsky: "... Cannot the present imperialist policy be supplanted by a new, ultra-imperialist policy, which will introduce the joint exploitation of the world by internationally united finance capital in place of the mutual rivalries of national finance capitals? Such a new phase of capitalism is at any rate conceivable. Can it be achieved? Sufficient premises are still lacking to enable us to answer this question." [117]

Hobson: "Christendom thus laid out in a few great federal empires, each with a retinue of uncivilized dependencies, seems to many the most legitimate development of present tendencies, and one which would offer the best hope of permanent peace on an assured basis of inter-Imperialism."

Kautsky called ultra-imperialism or super-imperialism what Hobson, thirteen years earlier, described as inter- imperialism. Except for coining a new and clever catchword, replacing one Latin prefix by another, the only progress Kautsky has made in the sphere of "scientific" thought is that he gave out as Marxism what Hobson, in effect, described as the cant of English parsons. After the Anglo-Boer War it was quite natural for this highly honorable caste to exert their main efforts to *console* the British middle class and the workers who had lost many of their relatives on the battlefields of South Africa and who were obliged to pay higher taxes in

order to guarantee still higher profits for the British financiers. And what better consolation could there be than the theory that imperialism is not so bad; that it stands close to inter- (or ultra-) imperialism, which can ensure permanent peace? No matter what the good intentions of the English parsons, or of sentimental Kautsky, may have been, the only objective, i.e., real, social significance of Kautsky's "theory" is this: it is a most reactionary method of consoling the masses with hopes of permanent peace being possible under capitalism, by distracting their attention from the sharp antagonisms and acute problems of the present times, and directing it towards illusory prospects of an imaginary "ultraimperialism" of the future. Deception of the masses—that is all there is in Kautsky's "Marxist" theory.

Indeed, it is enough to compare well-known and indisputable facts to become convinced of the utter falsity of the prospects which Kautsky tries to conjure up before the German workers (and the workers of all lands). Let us consider India, Indo-China and China. It is known that these three colonial and semi-colonial countries, with a population of six to seven hundred million, are subjected to the exploitation of the finance capital of several imperialist powers: Great Britain, France, Japan, the U.S.A., etc. Let us assume that these imperialist countries form alliances against one another in order to protect or enlarge their possessions, their interests and their spheres of influence in these Asiatic states; these alliances will be "inter-imperialist", or "ultra-imperialist" alliances. Let us assume that *all* the imperialist countries conclude an alliance for the "peaceful" division of these parts of Asia; this alliance would be an alliance of "internationally united finance capital". There are actual examples of alliances of this kind in the history of the twentieth century—the attitude of the powers to China, for instance. We ask, is it "conceivable", assuming that the capitalist system remains intact—and this is precisely the assumption that Kautsky does make—that such alliances would be more than temporary, that they would eliminate friction, conflicts and struggle in every possible form?

The question has only to be presented clearly for any other than a negative answer to be impossible. This is because the only conceivable basis under capitalism for the division of spheres of influence, interests, colonies, etc., is a calculation of the *strength* of those participating, their general

economic, financial, military strength, etc. And the strength of these participants in the division does not change to an equal degree, for the *even* development of different undertakings, trusts, branches of industry, or countries is impossible under capitalism. Half a century ago Germany was a miserable, insignificant country, if her capitalist strength is compared with that of the Britain of that time; Japan compared with Russia in the same way. Is it "conceivable" that in ten or twenty years' time the relative strength of the imperialist powers will have remained unchanged? It is out of the question.

Therefore, in the realities of the capitalist system, and not in the banal philistine fantasies of English parsons, or of the German "Marxist", Kautsky, "inter-imperialist" or "ultra-imperialist" alliances, no matter what form they may assume, whether of one imperialist coalition against another, or of a general alliance embracing *all* the imperialist powers, are *inevitably nothing* more than a "truce" in periods between wars. Peaceful alliances prepare the ground for wars, and in their turn grow out of wars; the one conditions the other, producing alternating forms of peaceful and non-peaceful struggle on *one and the same* basis of imperialist connections and relations within world economics and world politics. But in order to pacify the workers and reconcile them with the social-chauvinists who have deserted to the side of the bourgeoisie, over-wise Kautsky *separates* one link of a single chain from another, separates the present peaceful (and ultra-imperialist, nay, ultra-ultra-imperialist) alliance of *all* the powers for the "pacification" of China (remember the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion) from the non-peaceful conflict of tomorrow, which will prepare the ground for another "peaceful" general alliance for the partition, say, of Turkey, on the day after tomorrow, *etc., etc.* Instead of showing the living connection between periods of imperialist peace and periods of imperialist war, Kautsky presents the workers with a lifeless abstraction in order to reconcile them to their lifeless leaders.

An American writer, Hill, in his *A History of the Diplomacy in the International Development of Europe* refers in his preface to the following periods in the recent history of diplomacy: (1) the era of revolution; (2) the constitutional movement; (3) the present era of "commercial imperialism".

[118] Another writer divides the history of Great Britain's "world policy" since 1870 into four periods: (1) the first Asiatic period (that of the struggle against Russia's advance in Central Asia towards India); (2) the African period (approximately 1885-1902): that of the struggle against France for the partition of Africa (the "Fashoda incident" of 1898 which brought her within a hair's breadth of war with France); (3) the second Asiatic period (alliance with Japan against Russia); and (4) the "European" period, chiefly anti-German. [119] "The political patrol clashes take place on the financial field," wrote the banker, Riesser, in 1905, in showing how French finance capital operating in Italy was preparing the way for a political alliance of these countries, and how a conflict was developing between Germany and Great Britain over Persia, between all the European capitalists over Chinese loans, etc. Behold, the living reality of peaceful "ultra-imperialist" alliances in their inseverable connection with ordinary imperialist conflicts!

Kautsky's obscuring of the deepest contradictions of imperialism, which inevitably boils down to painting imperialism in bright colors, leaves its traces in this writer's criticism of the political features of imperialism. Imperialism is the epoch of finance capital and of monopolies, which introduce everywhere the striving for domination, not for freedom. Whatever the political system, the result of these tendencies is everywhere reaction and an extreme intensification of antagonisms in this field. Particularly intensified become the yoke of national oppression and the striving for annexations, i.e., the violation of national independence (for annexation is nothing but the violation of the right of nations to self-determination). Hilferding rightly notes the connection between imperialism and the intensification of national oppression. "In the newly opened-up countries," he writes, "the capital imported into them intensifies antagonisms and excites against the intruders the constantly growing resistance of the peoples who are awakening to national consciousness; this resistance can easily develop into dangerous measures against foreign capital. The old social relations become completely revolutionized, the age-long agrarian isolation of 'nations without history' is destroyed and they are drawn into the capitalist whirlpool. Capitalism itself gradually provides the subjugated with the means and resources for their emancipation and they set out to achieve the goal which once seemed highest to the European nations: the creation of a united national state as a means to economic and cultural

freedom. This movement for national independence threatens European capital in its most valuable and most promising fields of exploitation, and European capital can maintain its domination only by continually increasing its military forces." [120]

To this must be added that it is not only in newly opened-up countries, but also in the old, that imperialism is leading to annexation, to increased national oppression, and, consequently, also to increasing resistance. While objecting to the intensification of political reaction by imperialism, Kautsky leaves in the shade a question that has become particularly urgent, viz., the impossibility of unity with the opportunists in the epoch of imperialism. While objecting to annexations , he presents his objections in a form that is most acceptable and least offensive to the opportunists. He addresses himself to a German audience, yet he obscures the most topical and important point, for instance, the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine by Germany. In order to appraise this "mental aberration" of Kautsky's I shall take the following example. Let us suppose that the Japanese condemn the annexation of the Philippines by the Americans. The question is: will many believe that he does so because he has a horror of annexations as such, and not because he himself has a desire to annex the Philippines? And shall we not be constrained to admit that the "fight" the Japanese is waging against annexations can be regarded as being sincere and politically honest only if he fights against the annexation of Korea by Japan, and urges freedom for Korea to secede from Japan?

Kautsky's theoretical analysis of imperialism, as well as his economic and political critique of imperialism, are permeated *through and through* with a spirit, absolutely irreconcilable with Marxism, of obscuring and glossing over the fundamental contradictions of imperialism and with a striving to preserve at all costs the crumbling unity with opportunism in the European working-class movement.

Chapter 10: The Place of Imperialism in History

We have seen that in its economic essence imperialism is monopoly capitalism. This in itself determines its place in history, for monopoly that grows out of the soil of free competition, and precisely out of free competition, is the transition from the capitalist system to a higher socio-economic order. We must take special note of the four principal types of monopoly, or principal manifestations of monopoly capitalism, which are characteristic of the epoch we are examining.

Firstly, monopoly arose out of the concentration of production at a very high stage. This refers to the monopolist capitalist associations, cartels, syndicates, and trusts. We have seen the important part these play in present-day economic life. At the beginning of the twentieth century, monopolies had acquired complete supremacy in the advanced countries, and although the first steps towards the formation of the cartels were taken by countries enjoying the protection of high tariffs (Germany, America), Great Britain, with her system of free trade, revealed the same basic phenomenon, only a little later, namely, the birth of monopoly out of the concentration of production.

Secondly, monopolies have stimulated the seizure of the most important sources of raw materials, especially for the basic and most highly cartelized industries in capitalist society: the coal and iron industries. The monopoly of the most important sources of raw materials has enormously increased the power of big capital, and has sharpened the antagonism between cartelized and non-cartelized industry.

Thirdly, monopoly has sprung from the banks. The banks have developed from modest middleman enterprises into the monopolists of finance capital. Some three to five of the biggest banks in each of the foremost capitalist countries have achieved the “personal link-up” between industrial and bank capital, and have concentrated in their hands the control of thousands upon

thousands of millions which form the greater part of the capital and income of entire countries. A financial oligarchy, which throws a close network of dependence relationships over all the economic and political institutions of present-day bourgeois society without exception—such is the most striking manifestation of this monopoly.

Fourthly, monopoly has grown out of colonial policy. To the numerous "old" motives of colonial policy, finance capital has added the struggle for the sources of raw materials, for the export of capital, for spheres of influence, i.e., for spheres for profitable deals, concessions, monopoly profits and so on, economic territory in general. When the colonies of the European powers,for instance, comprised only one-tenth of the territory of Africa(as was the case in 1876), colonial policy was able to develop—by methods other than those of monopoly—by the "free grabbing" of territories, so to speak. But when nine-tenths of Africa had been seized (by 1900), when the whole world had been divided up,there was inevitably ushered in the era of monopoly possession of colonies and, consequently, of particularly intense struggle for the division and the redivision of the world.

The extent to which monopolist capital has intensified all the contradictions of capitalism is generally known. It is sufficient to mention the high cost of living and the tyranny of the cartels. This intensification of contradictions constitutes the most powerful driving force of the transitional period of history, which began from the time of the final victory of world finance capital.

Monopolies, oligarchy, the striving for domination and not for freedom, the exploitation of an increasing number of small or weak nations by a handful of the richest or most powerful nations—all these have given birth to those distinctive characteristics of imperialism which compel us to define it as parasitic or decaying capitalism. More and more prominently there emerges, as one of the tendencies of imperialism, the creation of the "rentier state", the usurer state, in which the bourgeoisie to an ever-increasing degree lives on the proceeds of capital exports and by "clipping coupons". It would be a mistake to believe that this tendency to decay precludes the rapid growth of capitalism. It does not. In the epoch of imperialism, certain

branches of industry, certain strata of the bourgeoisie and certain countries betray, to a greater or lesser degree, now one and now another of these tendencies. On the whole, capitalism is growing far more rapidly than before; but this growth is not only becoming more and more uneven in general, its unevenness also manifests itself, in particular, in the decay of the countries which are richest in capital (Britain).

In regard to the rapidity of Germany's economic development, Riesser, the author of the book on the big German banks, states: "The progress of the preceding period (1848-70), which had not been exactly slow, compares with the rapidity with which the whole of Germany's national economy, and with it German banking, progressed during this period (1870-1905) in about the same way as the speed of the mail coach in the good old days compares with the speed of the present-day automobile ... which is whizzing past so fast that it endangers not only innocent pedestrians in its path, but also the occupants of the car." In its turn, this finance capital which has grown with such extraordinary rapidity is not unwilling, precisely because it has grown so quickly, to pass on to a more "tranquil" possession of colonies which have to be seized—and not only by peaceful methods—from richer nations. In the United States, economic development in the last decades has been even more rapid than in Germany, *and for this very reason* , the parasitic features of modern American capitalism have stood out with particular prominence. On the other hand, a comparison of, say, the republican American bourgeoisie with the monarchist Japanese or German bourgeoisie shows that the most pronounced political distinction diminishes to an extreme degree in the epoch of imperialism—not because it is unimportant in general, but because in all these cases we are talking about a bourgeoisie which has definite features of parasitism.

The receipt of high monopoly profits by the capitalists in one of the numerous branches of industry, in one of the numerous countries, etc., makes it economically possible for them to bribe certain sections of the workers, and for a time a fairly considerable minority of them, and win them to the side of the bourgeoisie of a given industry or given nation against all the others. The intensification of antagonisms between imperialist nations for the division of the world increases this urge. And so

there is created that bond between imperialism and opportunism, which revealed itself first and most clearly in Great Britain, owing to the fact that certain features of imperialist development were observable there much earlier than in other countries. Some writers, L. Martov, for example, are prone to wave aside the connection between imperialism and opportunism in the working-class movement—a particularly glaring fact at the present time—by resorting to "official optimism" (*à la* Kautsky and Huysmans) like the following: the cause of the opponents of capitalism would be hopeless if it were progressive capitalism that led to the increase of opportunism, or, if it were the best-paid workers who were inclined towards opportunism, etc. We must have no illusions about "optimism" of this kind. It is optimism in respect of opportunism; it is optimism which serves to conceal opportunism. As a matter of fact the extraordinary rapidity and the particularly revolting character of the development of opportunism is by no means a guarantee that its victory will be durable: the rapid growth of a painful abscess on a healthy body can only cause it to burst more quickly and thus relieve the body of it. The most dangerous of all in this respect are those who do not wish to understand that the fight against imperialism is a sham and a humbug unless it is inseparably bound up with the fight against opportunism.

From all that has been said in this book on the economic essence of imperialism, it follows that we must define it as capitalism in transition, or, more precisely, as moribund capitalism. It is very instructive in this respect to note that bourgeois economists, in describing modern capitalism, frequently employ catchwords and phrases like "interlocking", "absence of isolation", etc.; "in conformity with their functions and course of development", banks are "not purely private business enterprises: they are more and more outgrowing the sphere of purely private business regulation". And this very Riesser, whose words I have just quoted, declares with all seriousness that the "prophecy" of the Marxists concerning "socialization" has "not come true"!

What then does this catchword "interlocking" express? It merely expresses the most striking feature of the process going on before our eyes. It shows that the observer counts the separate trees, but cannot see the wood. It

slavishly copies the superficial, the fortuitous, the chaotic. It reveals the observer as one who is overwhelmed by the mass of raw material and is utterly incapable of appreciating its meaning and importance. Ownership of shares, the relations between owners of private property "interlock in a haphazard way". But underlying this interlocking, its very base, are the changing social relations of production. When a big enterprise assumes gigantic proportions, and, on the basis of an exact computation of mass data, organizes according to plan the supply of primary raw materials to the extent of two-thirds, or three-fourths, of all that is necessary for tens of millions of people; when the raw materials are transported in a systematic and organized manner to the most suitable places of production, sometimes situated hundreds or thousands of miles from each other; when a single center directs all the consecutive stages of processing the material right up to the manufacture of numerous varieties of finished articles; when these products are distributed according to a single plan among tens and hundreds of millions of consumers (the marketing of oil in America and Germany by the American oil trust)—then it becomes evident that we have socialization of production, and not mere "interlocking", that private economic and private property relations constitute a shell which no longer fits its contents, a shell which must inevitably decay if its removal is artificially delayed, a shell which may remain in a state of decay for a fairly long period (if, at the worst, the cure of the opportunist abscess is protracted), but which will inevitably be removed.

The enthusiastic admirer of German imperialism, Schulze-Gaevernitz, exclaims:

"Once the supreme management of the German banks has been entrusted to the hands of a dozen persons, their activity is even today more significant for the public good than that of the majority of the Ministers of State. … (The "interlocking" of bankers, ministers, magnates of industry and rentiers is conveniently forgotten here.) If we imagine the development of those tendencies we have noted carried to their logical conclusion we will have: the money capital of the nation united in the banks; the banks themselves combined into cartels; the investment capital of the nation cast in the shape of securities. Then the forecast of that genius Saint-Simon will be fulfilled:

‘The present anarchy of production, which corresponds to the fact that economic relations are developing without uniform regulation, must make way for organization in production. Production will no longer be directed by isolated manufacturers, independent of each other and ignorant of man’s economic needs; that will be done by a certain public institution. A central committee of management, being able to survey the large field of social economy from a more elevated point of view, will regulate it for the benefit of the whole of society, will put the means of production into suitable hands, and above all will take care that there be constant harmony between production and consumption. Institutions already exist which have assumed as part of their functions a certain organization of economic labor, the banks.’ We are still a long way from the fulfillment of Saint-Simon’s forecast, but we are on the way towards it: Marxism, different from what Marx imagined, but different only in form.” [121]

A crushing “refutation” of Marx indeed, which retreats a step from Marx’s precise, scientific analysis to Saint-Simon’s guess-work, the guess-work of a genius, but guess-work all the same.

Appendix

Percentage of Total Deposits

	Big Berlin Banks	Capital equal to or greater than 10 mil marks	Capital of 1-10 million marks	Capital less than 1 million marks
# of Banks	9	48	115	N/A
1907-1908	47	33	17	4
1912-1913	49	36	12	3

Chapter 2, Table 1

The Deutsche Bank has holdings:	Direct or 1st degree dependence	2nd degree dependence	3rd degree dependence
Permanently	in 17 other banks	9 of 17 hold 34 other banks	4 of 9 hold 7 other banks
Indefinitely	in 5 other banks	-	-
Occasionally	in 8 other banks	5 of 8 hold 14 other banks	2 of 5 hold 2 other banks
Totals	in 30 other banks	14 of 30 hold 48 other banks	6 of 14 hold 9 other banks

Chapter 2, Table 2

Six Big Berlin Banks

Year	Germany Branches	Deposit banks Exchange offices	Constant holdings in German joint-stock banks	Total establishments
1895	16	14	1	42
1900	21	40	8	80
1911	104	276	63	450

Chapter 2, Table 3

Three Big French Banks

	Branches/offices		Capital in million francs	
Year	Provinces	Paris	Own capital	Deposits as capital
1870	47	17	200	427
1890	192	66	265	1,245
1909	1,033	196	887	4,363

Chapter 2, Table 4

Disconto-Gesselschaft Letters

Year	Letters received	Letters dispatched
1870	6,135	6,292
1890	85,800	87,513
1909	533,102	626,043

Chapter 2, Table 5

Deposits in billion marks

	Britain		France		Germany		
Year	Banks	Savings-banks	Banks	Savings-banks	Banks	Credit Societies	Savings-banks
1880	8.4	1.6	N/A	0.9	0.5	0.4	2.6
1888	12.4	2.0	1.5	2.1	1.1	0.4	4.5
1908	23.2	4.2	3.7	4.2	7.1	2.2	13.9

Chapter 2, Table 6

Bank assets (Oct-Nov 1912) in million rubles

Groups of Russian banks	Capital Invested		
	Productively	Speculatively	Total
Siberian Commercial, Russian, International, and Discount Bank	413.7	859.1	1,272.8
Commercial and Industrial, Russo-British	239.3	169.1	408.4
Russian-Asiatic, St. Petersburg Private, Azov-Don, Union Moscow, Russo-French Commercial	711.8	661.2	1,373.0
Subtotal (11 banks)	1,364.8	1,689.4	3,054.2
Moscow Merchants, Volga-Kama, Junker and Co., St. Petersburg Commercial (formerly Wawelberg), Bank of Moscow (formerly Ryabushinsky), Moscow Discount, Moscow Commercial, Moscow Private	504.2	391.1	895.3
Grand total (19 banks)	1,869.0	2,080.5	3,949.5

Chapter 3, Table 1

Year	Avg annual German industrial stock profit
1895	38.6%
1896	36.1%
1897	66.7%
1898	67.7%
1899	66.9%
1900	55.2%

Chapter 3, Table 2

Year	Issues in billion francs
1871-1880	76.1
1881-1890	64.5
1891-1900	100.4
1901-1910	197.8

Chapter 3, Table 3

Country	Financial Securities in 1910 in billion francs
Great Britain	142.00
United States	132.00
France	110.00
Germany	95.00
Russia	31.00
Austria-Hungary	24.00
Italy	14.00
Japan	12.00
Holland	12.50
Belgium	7.50
Spain	7.50
Switzerland	6.25
Denmark	3.75
Other	2.50
Total	600.00

Chapter 3, Table 4

Capital Invested Abroad in billion francs

Year	Britain	France	Germany
1862	3.6	-	-
1869	-	10.0	-
1872	15.0	-	-
1880	-	15.0	-
1882	22.0	-	NA
1890	-	20.0	-
1893	42.0	-	NA
1902	62.0	27-37	12.5
1914	75-100.0	60.0	44.0

Chapter 4, Table 1

Global Foreign Capital Investments circa 1910 in billion marks

Investors →	Britain	France	Germany	Total
Europe	4.0	23.0	18.0	45.0
America	37.0	4.0	10.0	51.0
Asia, Africa, Australia	29.0	8	7.0	44.0
Total	70.0	35.0	35.0	140.0

Chapter 4, Table 2

General Electric Co	Year	Turnover in million marks	Employees	Net profits in million marks
America	1907	252	28,000	35.4
(G.E.C)	1910	298	32,000	45.6
Germany	1907	216	30,700	14.5
(A.E.G)	1911	362	60,800	21.7

Chapter 4, Table 3

Percentage of Territory Belonging to European Colonial Powers & USA

Territory	1876	1900	Change
Africa	10.8%	90.4%	79.6%
Polynesia	56.8%	98.9%	42.1%
Asia	51.5%	56.6%	5.1%
Australia	100.0%	100.0%	--
America	27.5%	27.2%	-0.3%

Chapter 6, Table 1

Colonial Posessions (in million sq. m. and inhabitants)

Year	Great Brtain		France		Germany	
	Area	Population	Area	Population	Area	Population
1815-1830	NA	126.40	0.02	0.50	-	-
1860	2.50	145.10	0.20	3.40	-	-
1880	7.70	267.90	0.70	7.50	-	-
1899	9.30	309.00	3.70	56.40	1.00	14.70

Chapter 6, Table 2

Colonial Posessions (in million sq. m. and inhabitants)

Year	Colonies				Metropolitan		Total	
	1876		1914		1914		1914	
	Area	Population	Area	Population	Area	Population	Area	Population
Great Britain	22.5	251.9	33.5	393.5	0.3	46.5	33.8	440.0
Russia	17.0	15.9	17.4	33.2	5.4	136.2	22.8	169.4
France	0.9	6.0	10.6	55.5	0.5	39.6	11.1	95.1
Germany	-	-	2.9	12.3	0.5	64.9	3.4	77.2
United States	-	-	0.3	9.7	9.4	97.0	9.7	106.7
Japan	-	-	0.3	19.2	0.4	53.0	0.7	72.2
Subtotal	40.4	273.8	65.0	523.4	16.5	437.2	81.5	960.6
Colonies of other powers (Belgium, Holland, etc.)							9.9	45.3
Semi-colonial countries (Persia, China, Turkey)							14.5	361.2
Other countries							28.0	289.9
Total World (area and pop.)							133.9	1,657.0

Chapter 6, Table 3

Development of Global Powers at the turn of the 20th century

	Area	Pop	Transport		Trade	Industry (million)		
Principal economic areas	Mill. sq. miles	Mill.	Railways (thou. Km)	Mertantile fleet (mill. tons)	Imports & Exports (bill. Marks)	Output (Tons)		Cotton spindles
						Coal	Pig iron	
Central Europe	27.6	388.0	204.0	8.0	41.0	251.0	15.00	26.0
Colonies	23.6	146.0						
Britain	28.9	398.0	140.0	11.0	25.0	249.0	9.00	51.0
Colonies	28.6	355.0						
Russia	22.0	131.0	63.0	1.0	3.0	16.0	3.00	7.0
Eastern Asia	12.0	389.0	8.0	1.0	2.0	8.0	0.02	2.0
America	30.0	148.0	379.0	6.0	14.0	245.0	14.00	19.0

Chapter 7, Table 1

Railways (thousand kilometers)

Railway built in:	1890		1913		Increase	
Europe	224.0		346.0		122.0	
U.S.	268.0		411.0		143.0	
All Colonies	82.0		210.0		128.0	
Semi & fully independent states of Asia and America	43.0	125.0	137.0	347.0	94.0	222.0
Total	617.0		1,104.0		487.0	

Chapter 7, Table 2

Railways
(thousand kilometers)

Railway built in:	1890	1913	Increase
U.S.	268.0	413.0	145.0
British Empire	107.0	208.0	101.0
Russia	32.0	78.0	46.0
Germany	43.0	68.0	25.0
France	41.0	63.0	22.0
Total	491.0	830.0	339.0

Chapter 7, Table 3

Population and Workers in England (mill.)

Year	England and Wales Population	Workers in basic industries	Percent of total population
1851	17.9	4.1	23%
1901	32.5	4.9	15%

Chapter 8, Table 1

Export trade of Germany (mill. marks)

	Country	1889	1908	Percent Change
To countries financially dependent on Germany	Romania	48.2	70.8	46.9%
	Portugal	19	32.8	72.6%
	Argentina	60.7	147	142.2%
	Brazil	48.7	84.5	73.5%
	Chile	28.3	52.4	85.2%
	Turkey	29.9	64	114.0%
	Total (dependent)	234.8	451.5	92.3%

Chapter 9, Table 1

Export trade of Germany (mill. marks)

	Country	1889	1908	Percent Change
To countries financially independent of Germany	Great Britain	651.8	997.4	53.0%
	France	210.2	437.9	108.3%
	Belgium	137.2	322.8	135.3%
	Switzerland	177.4	401.1	126.1%
	Australia	21.2	64.5	204.2%
	Dutch East Indies	8.8	40.7	362.5%
	Total (independent)	1206.6	2264.4	87.7%

Chapter 9, Table 2

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[1] *Cf* . V. I. Lenin, *The Imperialist War* , Collected Works, Vol. XVIII, N. Y., pp. 468-72.-Ed.

[2] Figures taken from *Annalen des deutschen Reichs* , 1911, Zahn — *Lenin*

[3] *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1912* , p. 202 — *Lenin*

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[5] Hans Gideon Heymann, *Die gemischten Werke im deutschen Grosseiseugewerbe* , Stuttgart, 1904, (S. 256, 278). — *Lenin*

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[9] Dr. Fritz Kestner, *Der Organisationszwang. Eine Untersuchung über die Kämpfe zwischen Kartellen und Aussenseitern* , Berlin, 1912, S. 11. — *Lenin*

[10] R. Liefmann, *Beteiligungs- und Finanziertingsgesellschaften. Eine Studie über den modernen Kapitalismus und das Effektenwesen* , 1. Aufl., Jena, 1909, S. 212. — *Lenin*

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[12] Dr. S. Tschierschky, *Kartell und Trust* , Göttingen, 1903, S. 13. — *Lenin*

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[14] *Report of the Commissioner of Corporations on the Tobacco Industry* , Washington, 1909, p. 266, cited according to Dr. Paul Tafel, *Die nordamerikanischen Trusts und ihre Wirkungen auf den Fortschritt der Technik* , Stuttgart, 1913, S. 48. — *Lenin*

[15] Dr. P. Tafel, *ibid* ., S. 49. — *Lenin*

[16] Riesser, op. cit., third edition, p. 547 et seq. The newspapers (June 1916) report the formation of a new gigantic trust which combines the chemical industry of Germany. — *Lenin*

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[19] Jeidels, *Das Verhältnis der deutschen Grossbanken zur Industrie mit besonderer Berüchsichtigung der Eisenindustrie* , Leipzig, 1905, S. 271 — *Lenin*

[20] *Liefmann, Beteiligungs- und Finanzierungsgesellschaften* , S, 434. — *Lenin*

[21] *Ibid* , S. 465-66 — *Lenin*

[22] Jeidels, op. cit., S. 108. — *Lenin*

[23] Alfred Lansburgh, "Fünf Jahre deutsches Bankwesen" in *Die Bank* , 1913, No. 8. — *Lenin*

[24] Schulze-Gaevernitz, "Die deutsche Kreditbank" in " *Grundriss der Sozialökonomik* ", Tübingen, 1915, 137. — *Lenin*

[25] R. Liefmann, *Beteilgungs- und Finanzierungsgesellschaften. Eine Studie über den modernen Kapitalismus und das Effektenwesen* , I., Jena, 1909, 212. — *Lenin*

[26] Alfred Lansburgh, "Das Beteilgungssystem im deutschen Bankwesen", in *Die Bank* , 1910, 500. — *Lenin*

[27] Eugen Kaufmann, *Das französische Bankwesen* , Tübingen, 1911, 356 and 362 — *Lenin*

[28] Jean Lescure, *L'épargne en France* , Paris, 1914, p. 52. — *Lenin*

[29] A. Lansburgh, "Die Bank mit den 300 Millionen" in *Die Bank* , 1914, p. 426 — *Lenin*

[30] S. Tschierschky, op. cit., 128. — *Lenin*

[31] *Statistics of the National Monetary Commission,* quoted in *Die Bank* , 1910, S. 1200. — *Lenin*

[32] *Die Bank* , 1913, S 811. — *Lenin*

[33] *Die Bank* , 1914, S 316. — *Lenin*

[34] Dr. Oscar Stillich, *Geld- und Bankwesen,* Berlin, 1907, S. 169. — *Lenin*

[35] Schulze-Gaevernitz, "Die deutsche Kreditbank" in *Grundriss der Sozialökonomik* , Tübingen, 1915, S. 101 — *Lenin*

[36] Riesser, op. cit., 4th ed., S 629. — *Lenin*

[37] Schulze-Gaevernitz, "Die deutsche Kreditbank" in *Grundriss der Sozialökonomik,* Tübingen, 1915, S. 151 — *Lenin*

[38] *Die Bank* , 1912, S. 435. — *Lenin*

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[40] Jeidels, op. cit.; Riesser, op. cit. — *Lenin*

[41] Jeidels, op. cit., S 156-57 — *Lenin*

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[47] R. Liefmann, op. cit., S. 476. — *Lenin*

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[50] Schulze-Gaevernitz in *Grundriss der Sozialökonomik* , V, 2, S. 110. — *Lenin*

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[52] Kurt Heinig, "Der Weg des Elecktrotrusts" in *Die Neue Zeit* , 1912, 30. S. 484 — *Lenin*

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[55] *Die Bank* , 1913, No. 7, S. 630. — *Lenin*

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[57] *Finance Capital* , p. 172. — *Lenin*

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[61] "Der Zug zur Bank" in *Die Bank* , 1909, 1, S. 79. — *Lenin*

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[64] E. Agahd, op. cit., S. 202. — *Lenin*

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[68] Schilder, op. cit., S. 346, 350, 371. — *Lenin*

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[71] Jeidels, op. cit., S. 232. — *Lenin*

[72] Riesser, op. cit.; Diouritch, op. cit., p. 239; Kurt Heinig, op. cit. — *Lenin*

[73] Jeidels, op. cit., S. 192-93. — *Lenin*

[74] Diouritch, op. cit., pp. 245-46. — *Lenin*

[75] *Die Bank* , 1912, 1, S. 1036; 1912, 2, S. 629; 1913, 1, S. 388. — *Lenin*

[76] Riesser, op. cit., S. 125. — *Lenin*

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[78] Liefmann, *Kartelle und Trusts* , 2. A., S. 161. — *Lenin*

[79] A. Supan, *Die territoriale Entwicklung der europäischen Kolonien* , 1906, S. 254. — *Lenin*

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[87] Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Britischer Imperialismus und englischer Freihandel zu Beginn des 20-ten Jahrhunderts,* Leipzig, 1906, S. 318. Sartorius v. Waltershausen says the same in *Das volkswirtschaftliche System der Kapitalanlage im Auslande,* Berlin, 1907, S. 46. — *Lenin*

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[91] Hobson, *Imperialism* , London, 1902, p. 324. — *Lenin*

[92] *Die Neue Zeit* , 1914, 2 (B. 32), S. 921, Sept. 11, 1914. Cf. 1915, 2, S. 107 et seq. — *Lenin*

[93] *Ibid* ., 1915, 1, S. 144, April 30, 1915. — *Lenin*

[94] R. Calwer, *Einführung in die Weltwirtschaft* , Berlin, 1906. — *Lenin*

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[96] Cf. also Edgar Crammond, “The Economic Relations of the British and German Empires” in *The Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* , July 1914, p. 777 et seq. — *Lenin*

[97] Hobson, op. cit., pp. 59, 62. — *Lenin*

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[100] Schilder, op. cit., S. 393. — *Lenin*

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[103] Hobson, op. cit., pp. 103, 205, 144, 335, 386. — *Lenin*

[104] Gerhard Hildebrand, *Die Erschütterung der Industrieherrschaft und des Industriesozialismus* , 1910, S. 229 et seq. — *Lenin*

[105] Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Britischer Imperialismus* S. 301. — *Lenin*

[106] *Statistik des Deutschen Reichs* , Bd. 211. — *Lenin*

[107] Henger, *Die Kapitalsanlage der Franzosen* , Stuttgart, 1913. — *Lenin*

[108] Hourwich, *Immigralion and Labour,* New York, 1913. — *Lenin*

[109] *Briefwechsel von Marx und Engels* , Bd. II, S. 290; 1V, 433—Karl Kautsky, *Sozialismus und Kolonialpolitik* , Berlin, 1907, S. 79; this pamphlet was written by Kautsky in those infinitely distant days when he was still a Marxist. — *Lenin*

[110] Russian social-chauvinism in its overt form, represented by the Potresovs, Chkenkelis, Maslovs, etc., and its covert form (Chkeidze, Skobelev, Axelrod, Martov, etc.) also emerged from the Russian variety of opportunism, namely, liquidationism. — *Lenin*

[111] *Weltwirtschaffliches Archiv* , Bd. II, S. 193. — *Lenin*

[112] J. Patouillet *, L’impérialisme américain,* Dijon, 1904, p. 272. — *Lenin*

[113] *Bulletin de l’Institut International de Statistique,* T. XIX *,* Lvr. II, p. 225. — *Lenin*

[114] Kautsky, *Nationalstaat, imperialistischer Staat und Staatenbund,* Nürnberg, 1915, S. 72, 70. — *Lenin*

[115] *Finance Capital,* p. 567. — *Lenin*

[116] *Die Bank,* 1909, 2, S. 819 et seq. — *Lenin*

[117] *Die Neue Zeit* , April 30, 1915, S. 144. — *Lenin*

[118] David Jayne Hill, *History of the Diplomacy in the International Development of Europe* , Vol. I, p. X. —Lenin

[119] Schilder, op. cit., S. 178. — *Lenin*

[120] *Finance Capital* , p. 487. — *Lenin*

[121] *Grundriss der Sozialökonomik* , S. 146. — *Lenin*

“Left-Wing” Communism:

an Infantile Disorder

by V. I. Lenin, 1920

Chapter 1: In What Sense We Can Speak of the International Significance of the Russian Revolution

In the first months after the proletariat in Russia had won political power (October 25 [November 7], 1917), it might have seemed that the enormous difference between backward Russia and the advanced countries of Western Europe would lead to the proletarian revolution in the latter countries bearing very little resemblance to ours. We now possess quite considerable international experience, which shows very definitely that certain fundamental features of our revolution have a significance that is not local, or peculiarly national, or Russian alone, but international. I am not speaking here of international significance in the broad sense of the term: not merely several but all the primary features of our revolution, and many of its secondary features, are of international significance in the meaning of its effect: on all countries. I am speaking of it in the narrowest sense of the word, taking international significance to mean the international validity or the historical inevitability of a repetition, on an international scale, of what has taken place in our country. It must be admitted that certain fundamental features of our revolution do possess that significance.

It would, of course, be grossly erroneous to exaggerate this truth and to extend it beyond certain fundamental features of our revolution. It would also be erroneous to lose sight of the fact that, soon after the victory of the proletarian revolution in at least one of the advanced countries, a sharp change will probably come about: Russia will cease to be the model and will once again become a backward country (in the "Soviet" and the socialist sense).

At the present moment in history, however, it is the Russian model that reveals to *all* countries something—and something highly significant—of their near and inevitable future. Advanced workers in all lands have long realized this; more often than not, they have grasped it with their revolutionary class instinct rather than realized it. Herein lies the

international “significance” (in the narrow sense of the word) of Soviet power, and of the fundamentals of Bolshevik theory and tactics. The “revolutionary” leaders of the Second International, such as Kautsky in Germany and Otto Bauer and Friedrich Adler in Austria, have failed to understand this, which is why they have proved to be reactionaries and advocates of the worst kind of opportunism and social treachery. Incidentally, the anonymous pamphlet entitled *The World Revolution* (*Weltrevolution*), which appeared in Vienna in 1919 (*Sozialistische Bücherei* , Heft 11; Ignaz Brand), very clearly reveals their entire thinking and their entire range of ideas, or, rather, the full extent of their stupidity, pedantry, baseness and betrayal of working-class interests—and that, moreover, under the guise of “defending” the idea of “world revolution”.

We shall, however, deal with this pamphlet in greater detail some other time. We shall here note only one more point: in bygone days, when he was still a Marxist and not a renegade, Kautsky, dealing with the question as an historian, foresaw the possibility of a situation arising in which the revolutionary spirit of the Russian proletariat would provide a model to Western Europe. This was in 1902, when Kautsky wrote an article for the revolutionary *Iskra* , [1] entitled “The Slavs and Revolution”. Here is what he wrote in the article:

“At the present time [in contrast with 1848] it would seem that not only have the Slavs entered the ranks of the revolutionary nations, but that the center of revolutionary thought and revolutionary action is shifting more and more to the Slavs. The revolutionary center is shifting from the West to the East. In the first half of the nineteenth century it was located in France, at times in England. In 1848 Germany too joined the ranks of the revolutionary nations… The new century has begun with events which suggest the idea that we are approaching a further shift of the revolutionary center, namely, to Russia… Russia, which has borrowed so much revolutionary initiative from the West, is now perhaps herself ready to serve the West as a source of revolutionary energy. The Russian revolutionary movement that is now flaring up will perhaps prove to be the most potent means of exorcizing the spirit of flabby philistinism and coldly calculating politics that is beginning to spread in our midst, and it may cause the

fighting spirit and the passionate devotion to our great ideals to flare up again. To Western Europe, Russia has long ceased to be a bulwark of reaction and absolutism. I think the reverse is true today. Western Europe is becoming Russia's bulwark of reaction and absolutism… The Russian revolutionaries might perhaps have coped with the tsar long ago had they not been compelled at the same time to fight his ally—European capital. Let us hope that this time they will succeed in coping with both enemies, and that the new 'Holy Alliance' will collapse more rapidly than its predecessors did. However the present struggle in Russia may end, the blood and suffering of the martyrs whom, unfortunately, it will produce in too great numbers, will not have been in vain. They will nourish the shoots of social revolution throughout the civilized world and make them grow more luxuriantly and rapidly. In 1848 the Slavs were a killing frost which blighted the flowers of the people's spring. Perhaps they are now destined to be the storm that will break the ice of reaction and irresistibly bring with it a new and happy spring for the nations" (Karl Kautsky, "The Slavs and Revolution", *Iskra* , Russian Social-Democratic revolutionary newspaper, No. 18, March 10, 1902).

How well Karl Kautsky wrote eighteen years ago!

Chapter 2: An Essential Condition of the Bolshevik's Success

It is, I think, almost universally realized at present that the Bolsheviks could not have retained power for two and a half months, let alone two and a half years, without the most rigorous and truly iron discipline in our Party, or without the fullest and unreserved support from the entire mass of the working class, that is, from all thinking, honest, devoted and influential elements in it, capable of leading the backward strata or carrying the latter along with them.

The dictatorship of the proletariat means a most determined and most ruthless war waged by the new class against a *more powerful* enemy, the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased *tenfold* by their overthrow (even if only in a single country), and whose power lies, not only in the strength of international capital, the strength and durability of their international connections, but also in the *force of habit* , in the strength of *small - scale production.* Unfortunately, small-scale production is still widespread in the world, and small-scale production *engenders* capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale. All these reasons make the dictatorship of the proletariat necessary, and victory over the bourgeoisie is impossible without a long, stubborn and desperate life-and-death struggle which calls for tenacity, discipline, and a single and inflexible will.

I repeat: the experience of the victorious dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia has clearly shown even to those who are incapable of thinking or have had no occasion to give thought to the matter that absolute centralization and rigorous discipline of the proletariat are an essential condition of victory over the bourgeoisie.

This is often dwelt on. However, not nearly enough thought is given to what it means, and under what conditions it is possible. Would it not be better if the salutations addressed to the Soviets and the Bolsheviks were *more frequently* accompanied by a *profound analysis* of the reasons *why* the Bolsheviks have been able to build up the discipline needed by the revolutionary proletariat?

As a current of political thought and as a political party, Bolshevism has existed since 1903. Only the history of Bolshevism during the *entire* period of its existence can satisfactorily explain why it has been able to build up and maintain, under most difficult conditions, the iron discipline needed for the victory of the proletariat.

The first questions to arise are: how is the discipline of the proletariat's revolutionary party maintained? How is it tested? How is it reinforced? First, by the class-consciousness of the proletarian vanguard and by its devotion to the revolution, by its tenacity, self-sacrifice and heroism. Second, by its ability to link up, maintain the closest contact, and—if you wish—merge, in certain measure, with the broadest masses of the working people—primarily with the proletariat, *but also with the non - proletarian* masses of working people. Third, by the correctness of the political leadership exercised by this vanguard, by the correctness of its political strategy and tactics, provided the broad masses have seen, *from their own experience* , that they are correct. Without these conditions, discipline in a revolutionary party really capable of being the party of the advanced class, whose mission it is to overthrow the bourgeoisie and transform the whole of society, cannot be achieved. Without these conditions, all attempts to establish discipline inevitably fall flat and end up in phrase mongering and clowning. On the other hand, these conditions cannot emerge at once. They are created only by prolonged effort and hard-won experience. Their creation is facilitated by a correct revolutionary theory, which, in its turn, is not a dogma, but assumes final shape only in close connection with the practical activity of a truly mass and truly revolutionary movement.

The fact that, in 1917–20, Bolshevism was able, under unprecedentedly difficult conditions, to build up and successfully maintain the strictest centralization and iron discipline was due simply to a number of historical peculiarities of Russia.

On the one hand, Bolshevism arose in 1903 on a very firm foundation of Marxist theory. The correctness of this revolutionary theory, and of it alone, has been proved, not only by world experience throughout the nineteenth century, but especially by the experience of the seekings and vacillations, the errors and disappointments of revolutionary thought in Russia. For about half a century—approximately from the forties to the nineties of the last century—progressive thought in Russia, oppressed by a most brutal and reactionary tsarism, sought eagerly for a correct revolutionary theory, and followed with the utmost diligence and thoroughness each and every "last word" in this sphere in Europe and America. Russia achieved Marxism—the only correct revolutionary theory—through the *agony* she experienced in the course of half a century of unparalleled torment and sacrifice, of unparalleled revolutionary heroism, incredible energy, devoted searching, study, practical trial, disappointment. verification, and comparison with European experience. Thanks to the political emigration caused by tsarism, revolutionary Russia, in the second half of the nineteenth century, acquired a wealth of international links and excellent information on the forms and theories of the world revolutionary movement, such as no other country possessed.

On the other hand, Bolshevism, which had arisen on this granite foundation of theory, went through fifteen years of practical history (1903–17) unequaled anywhere in the world in its wealth of experience. During those fifteen years, no other country knew anything even approximating to that revolutionary experience, that rapid and varied succession of different forms of the movement—legal and illegal, peaceful and stormy, underground and open, local circles and mass movements, and parliamentary and terrorist forms. In no other country has there been concentrated, in so brief a period, such a wealth of forms, shades, and methods of struggle of *all* classes of modern society, a struggle which, owing to the backwardness of the country and the severity of the tsarist

yoke, matured with exceptional rapidity, and assimilated most eagerly and successfully the appropriate “last word” of American and European political experience.

Chapter 3: The Principal Stages in the History of Bolshevism

The years of preparation for revolution (1903–05)

The approach of a great storm was sensed everywhere. All classes were in a state of ferment and preparation. Abroad, the press of the political exiles discussed the theoretical aspects of *all* the fundamental problems of the revolution. Representatives of the three main classes, of the three principal political trends—the liberal-bourgeois, the petty-bourgeois-democratic (concealed behind "social-democratic" and "social-revolutionary" labels [2]), and the proletarian-revolutionary—anticipated and prepared the impending open class struggle by waging a most bitter struggle on issues of programme and tactics. *All* the issues on which the masses waged an armed struggle in 1905–07 and 1917–20 can (and should) be studied, in their embryonic form, in the press of the period. Among these three main trends there were, of course, a host of intermediate, transitional or half-hearted forms. It would be more correct to say that those political and ideological trends which were genuinely of a class nature crystallized in the struggle of press organs, parties, factions and groups; the classes were forging the requisite political and ideological weapons for the impending battles.

The years of revolution (1905–07). All classes came out into the open. All programmatic and tactical views were tested by the action of the masses. In its extent and acuteness, the strike struggle had no parallel anywhere in the world. The economic strike developed into a political strike, and the latter into insurrection. The relations between the proletariat, as the leader, and the vacillating and unstable peasantry, as the led, were tested in practice. The Soviet form of organization came into being in the spontaneous development of the struggle. The controversies of that period over the significance of the Soviets anticipated the great struggle of 1917–20. The

alternation of parliamentary and non-parliamentary forms of struggle, of the tactics of boycotting parliament and that of participating in parliament, of legal and illegal forms of struggle, and likewise their interrelations and connections—all this was marked by an extraordinary wealth of content. As for teaching the fundamentals of political science to masses and leaders, to classes and parties alike, each month of this period was equivalent to an entire year of "peaceful" and "constitutional" development. Without the "dress rehearsal" of 1905, the victory of the October Revolution in 1917 would have been impossible.

The years of reaction (1907–10). Tsarism was victorious. All the revolutionary and opposition parties were smashed. Depression, demoralization, splits, discord, defection, and pornography took the place of politics. There was an ever greater drift towards philosophical idealism; mysticism became the garb of counter-revolutionary sentiments. At the same time, however, it was this great defeat that taught the revolutionary parties and the revolutionary class a real and very useful lesson, a lesson in historical dialectics, a lesson in an understanding of the political struggle, and in the art and science of waging that struggle. It is at moments of need that one learns who one's friends are. Defeated armies learn their lesson.

Victorious tsarism was compelled to speed up the destruction of the remnants of the pre-bourgeois, patriarchal mode of life in Russia. The country's development along bourgeois lines proceeded apace. Illusions that stood outside and above class distinctions, illusions concerning the possibility of avoiding capitalism, were scattered to the winds. The class struggle manifested itself in a quite new and more distinct way.

The revolutionary parties had to complete their education. They were learning how to attack. Now they had to realize that such knowledge must be supplemented with the knowledge of how to retreat in good order. They had to realize—and it is from bitter experience that the revolutionary class learns to realize this—that victory is impossible unless one has learned how to attack and retreat properly. Of all the defeated opposition and revolutionary parties, the Bolsheviks affected the most orderly retreat, with the least loss to their "army", with its core best preserved, with the least

significant splits (in point of depth and incurability), with the least demoralization, and in the best condition to resume work on the broadest scale and in the most correct and energetic manner. The Bolsheviks achieved this only because they ruthlessly exposed and expelled the revolutionary phrase-mongers, those who did not wish to understand that one had to retreat, that one had to know how to retreat, and that one had absolutely to learn how to work legally in the most reactionary of parliaments, in the most reactionary of trade unions, cooperative and insurance societies and similar organizations.

The years of revival (1910–14). At first progress was incredibly slow, then, following the Lena events of 1912, it became somewhat more rapid. Overcoming unprecedented difficulties, the Bolsheviks thrust back the Mensheviks, whose role as bourgeois agents in the working-class movement was clearly realized by the entire bourgeoisie after 1905, and whom the bourgeoisie therefore supported in a thousand ways against the Bolsheviks. But the Bolsheviks would never have succeeded in doing this had they not followed the correct tactics of combining illegal work with the utilization of "legal opportunities", which they made a point of doing. In the elections to the arch-reactionary Duma, the Bolsheviks won the full support of the worker curia.

The First Imperialist World War (1914–17). Legal parliamentarianism, with an extremely reactionary "parliament", rendered most useful service to the Bolsheviks, the party of the revolutionary proletariat. The Bolshevik deputies were exiled to Siberia. [3] All shades of social-imperialism, social-chauvinism, social-patriotism, inconsistent and consistent internationalism, pacifism, and the revolutionary repudiation of pacifist illusions found full expression in the Russian émigré press. The learned fools and the old women of the Second International, who had arrogantly and contemptuously turned up their noses at the abundance of "factions" in the Russian socialist movement and at the bitter struggle they were waging among themselves, were unable—when the war deprived them of their vaunted "legality" in *all* the advanced countries— to organize anything even approximating such a free (illegal) interchange of views and such a free (illegal) evolution of correct views as the Russian revolutionaries did in

Switzerland and in a number of other countries. That was why both the avowed social-patriots and the "Kautskyites" of all countries proved to be the worst traitors to the proletariat. One of the principal reasons why Bolshevism was able to achieve victory in 1917–20 was that, since the end of 1914, it has been ruthlessly exposing the baseness and vileness of social-chauvinism and "Kautskyism" (to which Longuetism [4] in France, the views of the Fabians [5] and the leaders of the Independent Labour Party [6] in Britain, of Turati in Italy, etc., correspond), the masses later becoming more and more convinced, from their own experience, of the correctness of the Bolshevik views.

The second revolution in Russia (February to October 1917). Tsarism's senility and obsoleteness had (with the aid of the blows and hardships of a most agonizing war) created an incredibly destructive force directed against it. Within a few days Russia was transformed into a democratic bourgeois republic, freer—in war conditions—than any other country in the world. The leaders of the opposition and revolutionary parties began to set up a government, just as is done in the most "strictly parliamentary" republics; the fact that a man had been a leader of an opposition party in parliament—even in a most reactionary parliament— *facilitated* his subsequent role in the revolution.

In a few weeks the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries thoroughly assimilated all the methods and manners, the arguments and sophistries of the European heroes of the Second International, of the ministerialists [7] and other opportunist riff-raff. Everything we now read about the Scheidemanns and Noskes, about Kautsky and Hilferding, Renner and Austerlitz, Otto Bauer and Fritz Adler, Turati and Longuet, about the Fabians and the leaders of the Independent Labour Party of Britain—all this seems to us (and indeed is) a dreary repetition, a reiteration, of an old and familiar refrain. We have already witnessed all this in the instance of the Mensheviks. As history would have it, the opportunists of a backward country became the forerunners of the opportunists in a number of advanced countries.

If the heroes of the Second International have all gone bankrupt and have disgraced themselves over the question of the significance and role of the Soviets and Soviet rule; if the leaders of the three very important parties which have now left the Second International (namely, the German Independent Social-Democratic Party, [8] the French Longuetists and the British Independent Labour Party) have disgraced themselves and become entangled in this question in a most "telling" fashion; if they have all shown themselves slaves to the prejudices of petty-bourgeois democracy (fully in the spirit of the petty-bourgeois of 1848 who called themselves "Social-Democrats")—then we can only say that we have *already* witnessed *all this* in the instance of the Mensheviks. As history would have it, the Soviets came into being in Russia in 1905; from February to October 1917 they were turned to a false use by the Mensheviks, who went bankrupt because of their inability to understand the role and significance of the Soviets; today the idea of Soviet power has emerged *throughout the world* and is spreading among the proletariat of all countries with extraordinary speed. Like our Mensheviks, the old heroes of the Second International are *everywhere* going bankrupt, because they are incapable of understanding the role and significance of the Soviets. Experience has proved that, on certain very important questions of the proletarian revolution, *all* countries will inevitably have to do what Russia has done.

Despite views that are today often to be met with in Europe and America, the Bolsheviks began their victorious struggle against the parliamentary and (in fact) bourgeois republic and against the Mensheviks in a very cautious manner, and the preparations they made for it were by no means simple. At the beginning of the period mentioned, we did *not* call for the overthrow of the government but explained that it was impossible to overthrow it *without* first changing the composition and the temper of the Soviets. We did not proclaim a boycott of the bourgeois parliament, the Constituent Assembly, but said—and following the April (1917) Conference of our Party began to state officially in the name of the Party—that a bourgeois republic with a Constituent Assembly would be better than a bourgeois republic without a Constituent Assembly, but that a "workers' and peasants' " republic, a Soviet republic, would be better than any bourgeois-democratic, parliamentary republic. Without such thorough, circumspect and long

preparations, we could not have achieved victory in October 1917, or have consolidated that victory.

Chapter 4: The Struggle Against Which Enemies Within the Working-Class Movement Helped Bolshevism Develop, Gain Strength, and Become Steeled

First and foremost, the struggle against opportunism which in 1914 definitely developed into social-chauvinism and definitely sided with the bourgeoisie, against the proletariat. Naturally, this was Bolshevism's principal enemy within the working-class movement. It still remains the principal enemy on an international scale. The Bolsheviks have been devoting the greatest attention to this enemy. This aspect of Bolshevik activities is now fairly well known abroad too.

It was, however, different with Bolshevism's other enemy within the working-class movement. Little is known in other countries of the fact that Bolshevism took shape, developed and became steeled in the long years of struggle against *petty - bourgeois revolutionism* , which smacks of anarchism, or borrows something from the latter and, in all essential matters, does not measure up to the conditions and requirements of a consistently proletarian class struggle. Marxist theory has established—and the experience of all European revolutions and revolutionary movements has fully confirmed—that the petty proprietor, the small master (a social type existing on a very extensive and even mass scale in many European countries), who, under capitalism, always suffers oppression and very frequently a most acute and rapid deterioration in his conditions of life, and even ruin, easily goes to revolutionary extremes, but is incapable of perseverance, organization, discipline and steadfastness. A petty bourgeois driven to frenzy by the horrors of capitalism is a social phenomenon which, like anarchism, is characteristic of all capitalist countries. The instability of such revolutionism, its barrenness, and its tendency to turn rapidly into submission, apathy, phantasms, and even a frenzied infatuation with one bourgeois fad or another—all this is common knowledge. However, a

theoretical or abstract recognition of these truths does not at all rid revolutionary parties of old errors, which always crop up at unexpected occasions, in somewhat new forms, in a hitherto unfamiliar garb or surroundings, in an unusual—a more or less unusual—situation.

Anarchism was not infrequently a kind of penalty for the opportunist sins of the working-class movement. The two monstrosities complemented each other. And if in Russia—despite the more petty-bourgeois composition of her population as compared with the other European countries—anarchism's influence was negligible during the two revolutions (of 1905 and 1917) and the preparations for them, this should no doubt stand partly to the credit of Bolshevism, which has always waged a most ruthless and uncompromising struggle against opportunism. I say "partly", since of still greater importance in weakening anarchism's influence in Russia was the circumstance that in the past (the seventies of the nineteenth century) it was able to develop inordinately and to reveal its absolute erroneousness, its unfitness to serve the revolutionary class as a guiding theory.

When it came into being in 1903, Bolshevism took over the tradition of a ruthless struggle against petty-bourgeois, semi-anarchist (or dilettante-anarchist) revolutionism, a tradition which had always existed in revolutionary Social-Democracy and had become particularly strong in our country during the years 1900–03, when the foundations for a mass party of the revolutionary proletariat were being laid in Russia. Bolshevism took over and carried on the struggle against a party which, more than any other, expressed the tendencies of petty-bourgeois revolutionism, namely, the "Socialist-Revolutionary" Party, and waged that struggle on three main issues. First, that party, which rejected Marxism, stubbornly refused (or, it might be more correct to say: was unable) to understand the need for a strictly objective appraisal of the class forces and their alignment, before taking any political action. Second, this party considered itself particularly "revolutionary", or "Left", because of its recognition of individual terrorism, assassination—something that we Marxists emphatically rejected. It was, of course, only on grounds of expediency that we rejected individual terrorism, whereas people who were capable of condemning "on principle" the terror of the Great French Revolution, or, in general, the terror

employed by a victorious revolutionary party which is besieged by the bourgeoisie of the whole world, were ridiculed and laughed to scorn by Plekhanov in 1900–03, when he was a Marxist and a revolutionary. Third, the "Socialist-Revolutionaries" thought it very "Left" to sneer at the comparatively insignificant opportunist sins of the German Social-Democratic Party, while they themselves imitated the extreme opportunists of that party, for example, on the agrarian question, or on the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

History, incidentally, has now confirmed on a vast and world-wide scale the opinion we have always advocated, namely, that German *revolutionary* Social-Democracy (note that as far back as 1900–03 Plekhanov demanded Bernstein's expulsion from the Party, and in 1913 the Bolsheviks, always continuing this tradition, exposed Legien's [9] baseness, vileness and treachery) *came closest* to being the party the revolutionary proletariat needs in order to achieve victory. Today, in 1920, after all the ignominious failures and crises of the war period and the early post-war years, it can be plainly seen that, of all the Western parties, the German revolutionary Social-Democrats produced the finest leaders, and recovered and gained new strength more rapidly than the others did. This may be seen in the instances both of the Spartacists [10] and the Left, proletarian wing of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, which is waging an incessant struggle against the opportunism and spinelessness of the Kautskys, Hilferdings, Ledebours and Crispiens. If we now cast a glance to take in a complete historical period, namely, from the Paris Commune to the first Socialist Soviet Republic, we shall find that Marxism's attitude to anarchism in general stands out most definitely and unmistakably. In the final analysis, Marxism proved to be correct, and although the anarchists rightly pointed to the opportunist views on the state prevalent among most of the socialist parties, it must be said, first, that this opportunism was connected with the distortion, and even deliberate suppression, of Marx's views on the state (in my book, *The State and Revolution* , I pointed out that for thirty-six years, from 1875 to 1911, Bebel withheld a letter by Engels, [11] which very clearly, vividly, bluntly and definitively exposed the opportunism of the current Social-Democratic views on the state); second, that the rectification of these opportunist views, and the recognition of

Soviet power and its superiority to bourgeois parliamentary democracy proceeded most rapidly and extensively among those trends in the socialist parties of Europe and America that were most Marxist.

The struggle that Bolshevism waged against "Left" deviations within its own Party assumed particularly large proportions on two occasions: in 1908, on the question of whether or not to participate in a most reactionary "parliament" and in the legal workers' societies, which were being restricted by most reactionary laws; and again in 1918 (the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk [12]), on the question of whether one "compromise" or another was permissible.

In 1908 the "Left" Bolsheviks were expelled from our Party for stubbornly refusing to understand the necessity of participating in a most reactionary "parliament". [13] The "Lefts"—among whom there were many splendid revolutionaries who subsequently were (and still are) commendable members of the Communist Party—based themselves particularly on the successful experience of the 1905 boycott. When, in August 1905, the tsar proclaimed the convocation of a consultative "parliament", [14] the Bolsheviks called for its boycott, in the teeth of all the opposition parties and the Mensheviks, and the "parliament" was in fact swept away by the revolution of October 1905. [15] The boycott proved correct at the time, not because nonparticipation in reactionary parliaments is correct in general, but because we accurately appraised the objective situation, which was leading to the rapid development of the mass strikes first into a political strike, then into a revolutionary strike, and finally into an uprising. Moreover, the struggle centered at that time on the question of whether the convocation of the first representative assembly should be left to the tsar, or an attempt should be made to wrest its convocation from the old regime. When there was not, and could not be, any certainty that the objective situation was of a similar kind, and when there was no certainty of a similar trend and the same rate of development, the boycott was no longer correct.

The Bolsheviks' boycott of "parliament" in 1905 enriched the revolutionary proletariat with highly valuable political experience and showed that, when legal and illegal parliamentary and non-parliamentary forms of struggle are combined, it is sometimes useful and even essential to reject parliamentary

forms. It would, however, be highly erroneous to apply this experience blindly, imitatively and uncritically to *other* conditions and *other* situations. The Bolsheviks' boycott of the Duma in 1906 was a mistake, although a minor and easily remediable one. [16] The boycott of the Duma in 1907, 1908 and subsequent years was a most serious error and difficult to remedy, because, on the one hand, a very rapid rise of the revolutionary tide and its conversion into an uprising was not to be expected, and, on the other hand, the entire historical situation attendant upon the renovation of the bourgeois monarchy called for legal and illegal activities being combined. Today, when we look back at this fully completed historical period, whose connection with subsequent periods has now become quite clear, it becomes most obvious that in 1908–14 the Bolsheviks *could not have* preserved (let alone strengthened and developed) the core of the revolutionary party of the proletariat, had they not upheld, in a most strenuous struggle, the viewpoint that it was *obligatory* to combine legal and illegal forms of struggle, and that it was *obligatory* to participate even in a most reactionary parliament and in a number of other institutions hemmed in by reactionary laws (sick benefit societies, etc.).

In 1918 things did not reach a split. At that time the "Left" Communists formed only a separate group or "faction" within our Party, and that was not for long. In the same year, 1918, the most prominent representatives of "Left Communism", for example, Comrades Radek and Bukharin, openly acknowledged their error. It had seemed to them that the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was a compromise with the imperialists, which was inexcusable on principle and harmful to the party of the revolutionary proletariat. It was indeed a compromise with the imperialists, but it was a compromise which, under the circumstances, *had to be made* .

Today, when I hear our tactics in signing the Brest-Litovsk Treaty being attacked by the Socialist-Revolutionaries, for instance, or when I hear Comrade Lansbury say, in a conversation with me, "Our British trade union leaders say that if it was permissible for the Bolsheviks to compromise, it is permissible for them to compromise too", I usually reply by first of all giving a simple and "popular" example:

Imagine that your car is held up by armed bandits. You hand them over your money, passport, revolver and car. In return you are rid of the pleasant company of the bandits. That is unquestionably a compromise. " *Do ut des* " (I "give" you money, fire-arms and a car "so that you give" me the opportunity to get away from you with a whole skin). It would, however, be difficult to find a sane man who would declare such a compromise to be "inadmissible on principle", or who would call the compromiser an accomplice of the bandits (even though the bandits might use the car and the firearms for further robberies). Our compromise with the bandits of German imperialism was just that kind of compromise.

But when, in 1914–18 and then in 1918–20, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in Russia, the Scheidemannites (and to a large extent the Kautskyites) in Germany, Otto Bauer and Friedrich Adler (to say nothing of the Renners and Co.) in Austria, the Renaudels and Longuets and Co. in France, the Fabians, the Independents and the Labourites in Britain entered into *compromises* with the bandits of their own bourgeoisie, and sometimes of the "Allied" bourgeoisie, and *against* the revolutionary proletariat of their own countries, all these gentlemen were actually acting as *accomplices in banditry* .

The conclusion is clear: to reject compromises "on principle", to reject the permissibility of compromises in general, no matter of what kind, is childishness, which it is difficult even to consider seriously. A political leader who desires to be useful to the revolutionary proletariat must be able to distinguish *concrete* cases of compromises that are inexcusable and are an expression of opportunism and *treachery* ; he must direct all the force of criticism, the full intensity of merciless exposure and relentless war, against *these concrete* compromises, and not allow the past masters of "practical" socialism and the parliamentary Jesuits to dodge and wriggle out of responsibility by means of disquisitions on "compromises in general". It is in this way that the "leaders" of the British trade unions, as well as of the Fabian society and the "Independent" Labour Party, dodge responsibility *for the treachery they have perpetrated* , for having made *a compromise* that is really tantamount to the worst kind of opportunism, treachery and betrayal.

There are different kinds of compromises. One must be able to analyze the situation and the concrete conditions of each compromise, or of each variety of compromise. One must learn to distinguish between a man who has given up his money and fire-arms to bandits so as to lessen the evil they can do and to facilitate their capture and execution, and a man who gives his money and fire-arms to bandits so as to share in the loot. In politics this is by no means always as elementary as it is in this childishly simple example. However, anyone who is out to think up for the workers some kind of recipe that will provide them with cut-and-dried solutions for all contingencies, or promises that the policy of the revolutionary proletariat will never come up against difficult or complex situations, is simply a charlatan.

To leave no room for misinterpretation, I shall attempt to outline, if only very briefly, several fundamental rules for the analysis of concrete compromises.

The party which entered into a compromise with the German imperialists by signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk had been evolving its internationalism in practice ever since the end of 1914. It was not afraid to call for the defeat of the tsarist monarchy and to condemn “defense of country ” in a war between two imperialist robbers. The parliamentary representatives of this party preferred exile in Siberia to taking a road leading to ministerial portfolios in a bourgeois government. The revolution that overthrew tsarism and established a democratic republic put this party to a new and tremendous test—it did not enter into any agreements with its “own” imperialists, but prepared and brought about their overthrow. When it had assumed political power, this party did not leave a vestige of either landed or capitalist ownership. After making public and repudiating the imperialists’ secret treaties, this party proposed peace to *all* nations, and yielded to the violence of the Brest-Litovsk robbers only after the Anglo-French imperialists had torpedoed the conclusion of a peace, and after the Bolsheviks had done everything humanly possible to hasten the revolution in Germany and other countries. The absolute correctness of this compromise, entered into by such a party in such a situation, is becoming ever clearer and more obvious with every day.

The Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries in Russia (like all the leaders of the Second International throughout the world, in 1914–20) began with treachery—by directly or indirectly justifying "defense of country", i.e., the defense of *their own* predatory bourgeoisie. They continued their treachery by entering into a coalition with the bourgeoisie of *their own* country, and fighting, together with *their own* bourgeoisie, against the revolutionary proletariat of their own country. Their bloc, first with Kerensky and the Cadets, and then with Kolchak and Denikin in Russia—like the bloc of their *confrères* abroad with the bourgeoisie of *their* respective countries—was in fact desertion to the side of the bourgeoisie, against the proletariat. From beginning to end, *their* compromise with the bandits of imperialism meant their becoming *accomplices* in imperialist banditry.

Chapter 5: “Left-Wing” Communism in Germany. The Leaders, the Party, the Class, the Masses

The German Communists we must now speak of call themselves, not “Left-wingers” but, if I am not mistaken, an “opposition on principle”. [17] From what follows below it will, however, be seen that they reveal all the symptoms of the “infantile disorder of Leftism”.

Published by the “local group in Frankfurt am Main”, a pamphlet reflecting the point of view of this opposition, and entitled *The Split in the Communist Party of Germany* (*The Spartacus League*) sets forth the substance of this opposition’s views most saliently, and with the utmost clarity and concision. A few quotations will suffice to acquaint the reader with that substance:

“The Communist Party is the party of the most determined class struggle…”

“…Politically, the transitional period [between capitalism and socialism] is one of the proletarian dictatorship…”

“…The question arises: who is to exercise this dictatorship: *the Communist Party or the proletarian class* ? … *Fundamentally* , should we strive for a dictatorship of the Communist Party, or for a dictatorship of the proletarian class?…”

(All italics as in the original)

The author of the pamphlet goes on to accuse the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany of seeking ways of achieving a *coalition with the Independent Social - Democratic Party of Germany* , and of raising “ *the question of recognizing* , *in principle* , *all political means* ” of struggle,

including parliamentarianism, with the sole purpose of concealing its actual and main efforts to form a coalition with the Independents. The pamphlet goes on to say:

"The opposition have chosen another road. They are of the opinion that the question of the rule of the Communist Party and of the dictatorship of the Party is merely one of tactics. In any case, rule by the Communist Party is the ultimate form of any party rule. *Fundamentally* , we must work for the dictatorship of the proletarian class. And all the measures of the Party, its organizations, methods of struggle, strategy and tactics should be directed to that end. Accordingly, all compromise with other parties, all reversion to parliamentary forms of struggle which have become historically and politically obsolete, and any policy of maneuvering and compromise must be emphatically rejected." "Specifically proletarian methods of revolutionary struggle must be strongly emphasized. New forms of organization must be created on the widest basis and with the widest scope in order to enlist the most extensive proletarian circles and strata to take part in the revolutionary struggle under the leadership of the Communist Party. A *Workers' Union* , based on factory organizations, should be the rallying point for all revolutionary elements. This should unite all workers who follow the slogan: 'Get out of the trade unions!' It is here that the militant proletariat musters its ranks for battle. Recognition of the class struggle, of the Soviet system and of the dictatorship should be sufficient for enrolment. All subsequent political education of the fighting masses and their political orientation in the struggle are the task of the Communist Party, which stands outside the Workers' Union…

"…Consequently, two Communist parties are now arrayed against each other:

" *One is a party of leaders* , which is out to organize the revolutionary struggle and to direct it from *above* , accepting compromises and parliamentarianism so as to create a situation enabling it to join a coalition government exercising a dictatorship.

“ *The other is a mass party* , which expects an upsurge of the revolutionary struggle from *below* , which knows and applies a single method in this struggle—a method which clearly leads to the goal—and rejects all parliamentary and opportunist methods. That single method is the unconditional *overthrow of the bourgeoisie* , so as then to set up the proletarian class dictatorship for the accomplishment of socialism…

“…There—the dictatorship of leaders; here—the dictatorship of the masses! That is our slogan.”

Such are the main features characterizing the views of the opposition in the German Communist Party.

Any Bolshevik who has consciously participated in the development of Bolshevism since 1903 or has closely observed that development will at once say, after reading these arguments, “What old and familiar rubbish! What ‘Left-wing’ childishness!”

But let us examine these arguments a little more closely.

The mere presentation of the question—“dictatorship of the party *or* dictatorship of the class; dictatorship (party) of the leaders, *or* dictatorship (party) of the masses?”—testifies to most incredibly and hopelessly muddled thinking. These people want to *invent* something quite out of the ordinary, and, in their effort to be clever, make themselves ridiculous. It is common knowledge that the masses are divided into classes, that the masses can be contrasted with classes only by contrasting the vast majority in general, regardless of division according to status in the social system of production, with categories holding a definite status in the social system of production; that as a rule and in most cases—at least in present-day civilized countries—classes are led by political parties; that political parties, as a general rule, are run by more or less stable groups composed of the most authoritative, influential and experienced members, who are elected to the most responsible positions, and are called leaders. All this is elementary. All this is clear and simple. Why replace this with some kind of rigmarole,

some new Volapük? On the one hand, these people seem to have got muddled when they found themselves in a predicament, when the party's abrupt transition from legality to illegality upset the customary, normal and simple relations between leaders, parties and classes. In Germany, as in other European countries, people had become too accustomed to legality, to the free and proper election of "leaders" at regular party congresses, to the convenient method of testing the class composition of parties through parliamentary elections, mass meetings the press, the sentiments of the trade unions and other associations, etc. When, instead of this customary procedure, it became necessary, because of the stormy development of the revolution and the development of the civil war, to go over rapidly from legality to illegality, to combine the two, and to adopt the "inconvenient" and "undemocratic" methods of selecting, or forming, or preserving "groups of leaders"—people lost their bearings and began to think up some unmitigated nonsense. Certain members of the Communist Party of Holland, who were unlucky enough to be born in a small country with traditions and conditions of highly privileged and highly stable legality, and who had never seen a transition from legality to illegality, probably fell into confusion, lost their heads, and helped create these absurd inventions.

On the other hand, one can see simply a thoughtless and incoherent use of the now "fashionable" terms: "masses" and "leaders". These people have heard and memorized a great many attacks on "leaders", in which the latter have been contrasted with the "masses"; however, they have proved unable to think matters out and gain a clear understanding of what it was all about.

The divergence between "leaders " and "masses " was brought out with particular clarity and sharpness in all countries at the end of the imperialist war and following it. The principal reason for this was explained many times by Marx and Engels between the years 1852 and 1892, from the example of Britain. That country's exclusive position led to the emergence, from the "masses", of a semi–petty-bourgeois, opportunist "labor aristocracy". The leaders of this labor aristocracy were constantly going over to the bourgeoisie, and were directly or indirectly on its payroll. Marx earned the honor of incurring the hatred of these disreputable persons by openly branding them as traitors. Present-day (twentieth-century)

imperialism has given a few advanced countries an exceptionally privileged position, which, everywhere in the Second International, has produced a certain type of traitor, opportunist, and social-chauvinist leaders, who champion the interests of their own craft, their own section of the labor aristocracy. The opportunist parties have become separated from the “ masses” , i.e., from the broadest strata of the working people, their majority, the lowest-paid workers. The revolutionary proletariat cannot be victorious unless this evil is combated, unless the opportunist, social-traitor leaders are exposed, discredited and expelled. That is the policy the Third International has embarked on.

To go so far, in this connection, as to contrast, *in general* , the dictatorship of the masses with a dictatorship of the leaders is ridiculously absurd, and stupid. What is particularly amusing is that, in fact, instead of the old leaders, who hold generally accepted views on simple matters, *new leaders* are brought forth (under cover of the slogan “Down with the leaders!”), who talk rank stuff and nonsense. Such are Laufenberg, Wolffheim, Horner [18] , Karl Schroder, Friedrich Wendel and Karl Erler, [19] in Germany. Erler’s attempts to give the question more “profundity” and to proclaim that in general political parties are unnecessary and “bourgeois” are so supremely absurd that one can only shrug one’s shoulders. It all goes to drive home the truth that a minor error can always assume monstrous proportions if it is persisted in, if profound justifications are sought for it, and if it is carried to its logical conclusion.

Repudiation of the Party principle and of Party discipline—that is what the opposition has *arrived at* . And this is tantamount to completely disarming the proletariat in *the interests of the bourgeoisie* . It all adds up to that petty-bourgeois diffuseness and instability, that incapacity for sustained effort, unity and organized action, which, if encouraged, must inevitably destroy any proletarian revolutionary movement. From the standpoint of communism, repudiation of the Party principle means attempting to leap from the eve of capitalism’s collapse (in Germany), not to the lower or the intermediate phase of communism, but to the higher. We in Russia (in the third year since the overthrow of the bourgeoisie) are making the first steps in the transition from capitalism to socialism or the lower stage of

communism. Classes still remain, and will remain everywhere *for years after* the proletariat's conquest of power. Perhaps in Britain, where there is no peasantry (but where petty proprietors exist), this period may be shorter. The abolition of classes means, not merely ousting the landowners and the capitalists—that is something we accomplished with comparative ease; it also means *abolishing the small commodity producers* , and they *cannot be ousted* , or crushed; we *must learn to live* with them. They can (and must) be transformed and re-educated only by means of very prolonged, slow, and cautious organizational work. They surround the proletariat on every side with a petty-bourgeois atmosphere, which permeates and corrupts the proletariat, and constantly causes among the proletariat relapses into petty-bourgeois spinelessness, disunity, individualism, and alternating moods of exaltation and dejection. The strictest centralization and discipline are required within the political party of the proletariat in order to counteract this, in order that the *organizational* role of the proletariat (and that is its *principal* role) may be exercised correctly, successfully and victoriously. The dictatorship of the proletariat means a persistent struggle—bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society. The force of habit in millions and tens of millions is a most formidable force. Without a party of iron that has been tempered in the struggle, a party enjoying the confidence of all honest people in the class in question, a party capable of watching and influencing the mood of the masses, such a struggle cannot be waged successfully. It is a thousand times easier to vanquish the centralized big bourgeoisie than to "vanquish" the millions upon millions of petty proprietors; however, through their ordinary, everyday, imperceptible, elusive and demoralizing activities, they produce the *very* results which the bourgeoisie need and which tend to *restore* the bourgeoisie. Whoever brings about even the slightest weakening of the iron discipline of the party of the proletariat (especially during its dictatorship), is actually aiding the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.

Parallel with the question of the leaders—the party—the class—the masses, we must pose the question of the "reactionary" trade unions. But first I shall take the liberty of making a few concluding remarks based on the experience of our Party. There *have always been* attacks on the "dictatorship of leaders" in our Party. The first time I heard such attacks, I

recall, was in 1895, when, officially, no party yet existed, but a central group was taking shape in St. Petersburg, which was to assume the leadership of the district groups. [20] At the Ninth Congress of our Party (April 1920) [21] , there was a small opposition, which also spoke against the "dictatorship of leaders", against the "oligarchy", and so on. There is therefore nothing surprising, new, or terrible in the "infantile disorder" of "Left-wing communism" among the Germans. The ailment involves no danger, and after it the organism even becomes more robust. In our case, on the other hand, the rapid alternation of legal and illegal work, which made it necessary to keep the general staff—the leaders—under cover and cloak them in the greatest secrecy, sometimes gave rise to extremely dangerous consequences. The worst of these was that in 1912 the *agent provocateur* Malinovsky got into the Bolshevik Central Committee. He betrayed scores and scores of the best and most loyal comrades, caused them to be sentenced to penal servitude, and hastened the death of many of them. That he did not cause still greater harm was due to the correct balance between legal and illegal work. As member of the Party's Central Committee and Duma deputy, Malinovsky was forced, in order to gain our confidence, to help us establish legal daily papers, which even under tsarism were able to wage a struggle against the Menshevik opportunism and to spread the fundamentals of Bolshevism in a suitably disguised form. While, with one hand, Malinovsky sent scores and scores of the finest Bolsheviks to penal servitude and death, he was obliged, with the other, to assist in the education of scores and scores of thousands of new Bolsheviks through the medium of the legal press. Those German (and also British, American, French and Italian) comrades who are faced with the task of learning how to conduct revolutionary work within the reactionary trade unions would do well to give serious thought to this fact. [22]

In many countries, including the most advanced, the bourgeoisie are undoubtedly sending *agents provocateurs* into the Communist parties and will continue to do so. A skilful combining of illegal and legal work is one of the ways to combat this danger.

Chapter 6: Should Revolutionaries Work in Reactionary Trade Unions?

The German "Lefts" consider that, as far as they are concerned, the reply to this question is an unqualified negative. In their opinion, declamations and angry outcries (such as uttered by K. Horner in a particularly "solid" and particularly stupid manner) against "reactionary" and "counter-revolutionary" trade unions are sufficient "proof" that it is unnecessary and even inexcusable for revolutionaries and Communists to work in yellow, social-chauvinist, compromising and counter-revolutionary trade unions of the Legien type.

However firmly the German "Lefts" may be convinced of the revolutionism of such tactics, the latter are in fact fundamentally wrong, and contain nothing but empty phrases.

To make this clear, I shall begin with our own experience, in keeping with the general plan of the present pamphlet, which is aimed at applying to Western Europe whatever is universally practicable, significant and relevant in the history and the present-day tactics of Bolshevism.

In Russia today, the connection between leaders, party, class and masses, as well as the attitude of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its party to the trade unions, are concretely as follows: the dictatorship is exercised by the proletariat organized in the Soviets; the proletariat is guided by the Communist Party of Bolsheviks, which, according to the figures of the latest Party Congress (April 1920), has a membership of 611,000. The membership varied greatly both before and after the October Revolution, and used to be much smaller, even in 1918 and 1919. [23] We are apprehensive of an excessive growth of the Party, because careerists and charlatans, who deserve only to be shot, inevitably do all they can to insinuate themselves into the ranks of the ruling party. The last time we opened wide the doors of the Party—to workers and peasants only—was

when (in the winter of 1919) Yudenich was within a few versts of Petrograd, and Denikin was in Orel (about 350 versts from Moscow), i.e., when the Soviet Republic was in mortal danger, and when adventurers, careerists, charlatans and unreliable persons generally could not possibly count on making a profitable career (and had more reason to expect the gallows and torture) by joining the Communists. [24] The Party, which holds annual congresses (the most recent on the basis of one delegate per 1,000 members), is directed by a Central Committee of nineteen elected at the Congress, while the current work in Moscow has to be carried on by still smaller bodies, known as the Organising Bureau and the Political Bureau, which are elected at plenary meetings of the Central Committee, five members of the Central Committee to each bureau. This, it would appear, is a full-fledged "oligarchy". No important political or organizational question is decided by any state institution in our republic without the guidance of the Party's Central Committee.

In its work, the Party relies directly on the *trade unions* , which, according to the data of the last congress (April 1920), now have a membership of over four million and are formally *non - Party* . Actually, all the directing bodies of the vast majority of the unions, and primarily, of course, of the all-Russia general trade union center or bureau (the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions), are made up of Communists and carry out all the directives of the Party. Thus, on the whole, we have a formally non-communist, flexible and relatively wide and very powerful proletarian apparatus, by means of which the Party is closely linked up with the *class* and the *masses* , and by means of which, under the leadership of the Party, the *class dictatorship* is exercised. Without close contacts with the trade unions, and without their energetic support and devoted efforts, not only in economic, *but also in military* affairs, it would of course have been impossible for us to govern the country and to maintain the dictatorship for two and a half months, let alone two and a half years. In practice, these very close contacts naturally call for highly complex and diversified work in the form of propaganda, agitation, timely and frequent conferences, not only with the leading trade union workers, but with influential trade union workers generally; they call for a determined struggle against the Mensheviks, who still have a certain though very small following to whom they teach all kinds of counter-revolutionary machinations, ranging from an

ideological defense of (*bourgeois*) democracy and the preaching that the trade unions should be "independent" (independent of proletarian state power!) to sabotage of proletarian discipline, etc., etc.

We consider that contacts with the "masses" through the trade unions are not enough. In the course of our revolution, practical activities have given rise to such institutions as *non - Party workers' and peasants' conferences* , and we strive by every means to support, develop and extend this institution in order to be able to observe the temper of the masses, come closer to them, meet their requirements, promote the best among them to state posts, etc. Under a recent decree on the transformation of the People's Commissariat of State Control into the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, non-Party conferences of this kind have been empowered to select members of the State Control to carry out various kinds of investigations, etc.

Then, of course, all the work of the Party is carried on through the Soviets, which embrace the working masses irrespective of occupation. The district congresses of Soviets are *democratic* institutions, the like of which even the best of the democratic republics of the bourgeois world have never known; through these congresses (whose proceedings the Party endeavors to follow with the closest attention), as well as by continually appointing class-conscious workers to various posts in the rural districts, the proletariat exercises its role of leader of the peasantry, gives effect to the dictatorship of the urban proletariat wages a systematic struggle against the rich, bourgeois, exploiting and profiteering peasantry, etc.

Such is the general mechanism of the proletarian state power viewed "from above", from the standpoint of the practical implementation of the dictatorship. We hope that the reader will understand why the Russian Bolshevik who has known this mechanism for twenty-five years and has seen it develop out of small, illegal and underground circles, cannot help regarding all this talk about "from above" *or* "from below", about the dictatorship of leaders *or* the dictatorship of the masses, etc., as ridiculous and childish nonsense, something like discussing whether a man's left leg or right arm is of greater use to him.

We cannot but regard as equally ridiculous and childish nonsense the pompous, very learned, and frightfully revolutionary disquisitions of the German Lefts to the effect that Communists cannot and should not work in reactionary trade unions, that it is permissible to turn down such work, that it is necessary to withdraw from the trade unions and create a brand-new and immaculate "Workers' Union" invented by very pleasant (and, probably, for the most part very youthful) Communists, etc., etc.

Capitalism inevitably leaves socialism the legacy, on the one hand, of the old trade and craft distinctions among the workers, distinctions evolved in the course of centuries; on the other hand, trade unions, which only very slowly, in the course of years and years, can and will develop into broader industrial unions with less of the craft union about them (embracing entire industries, and not only crafts, trades and occupations), and later proceed, through these industrial unions, to eliminate the division of labor among people, to educate and school people, give them *all - round development and an all - round* training, so that they *are able to do everything* . Communism is advancing and must advance towards that goal, and *will reach* it, but only after very many years. To attempt in practice, today, to anticipate this future result of a fully developed, fully stabilized and constituted, fully comprehensive and mature communism would be like trying to teach higher mathematics to a child of four.

We can (and must) begin to build socialism, not with abstract human material, or with human material specially prepared by us, but with the human material bequeathed to us by capitalism. True, that is no easy matter, but no other approach to this task is serious enough to warrant discussion.

The trade unions were a tremendous step forward for the working class in the early days of capitalist development, inasmuch as they marked a transition from the workers' disunity and helplessness to the *rudiments* of class organization. When the *revolutionary party of the proletariat* , the *highest* form of proletarian class organization, began to take shape (and the Party will not merit the name until it learns to weld the leaders into one indivisible whole with the class and the masses) the trade unions inevitably

began to reveal *certain* reactionary features, a certain craft narrow-mindedness, a certain tendency to be non-political, a certain inertness, etc. However, the development of the proletariat did not, and could not, proceed anywhere in the world otherwise than through the trade unions, through reciprocal action between them and the party of the working class. The proletariat's conquest of political power is a gigantic step forward for the proletariat as a class, and the Party must more than ever and in a new way, not only in the old, educate and guide the trade unions, at the same time bearing in mind that they are and will long remain an indispensable "school of communism" and a preparatory school that trains proletarians to exercise their dictatorship, an indispensable organization of the workers for the gradual transfer of the management of the whole economic life of the country to the working *class* (and not to the separate trades), and later to all the working people.

In the sense mentioned above, a *certain* "reactionism" in the trade unions is *inevitable* under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Not to understand this means a complete failure to understand the fundamental conditions of the *transition* from capitalism to socialism. It would be egregious folly to fear *this* " reactionism " or to try to *evade* or leap over it, for it would mean fearing that function of the proletarian vanguard which consists in training, educating, enlightening and drawing into the new life the most backward strata and masses of the working class and the peasantry. On the other hand, it would be a still graver error to postpone the achievement of the dictatorship of the proletariat until a time when there will not be a single worker with a narrow-minded craft outlook, or with craft and craft-union prejudices. The art of politics (and the Communist's correct understanding of his tasks) consists in correctly gauging the conditions and the moment when the vanguard of the proletariat can successfully assume power, when it is able—during and after the seizure of power—to win adequate support from sufficiently broad strata of the working class and of the non-proletarian working masses, and when it is able thereafter to maintain, consolidate and extend its rule by educating, training and attracting ever broader masses of the working people.

Further. In countries more advanced than Russia, a certain reactionism in the trade unions has been and was bound to be manifested in a far greater measure than in our country. Our Mensheviks found support in the trade unions (and to some extent still do so in a small number of unions), as a result of the latter's craft-narrow-mindedness , craft-selfishness and opportunism. The Mensheviks of the West have acquired a much firmer footing in the trade unions; there the *craft - union, narrow - minded, selfish, case - hardened, covetous, and petty - bourgeois "labor aristocracy", imperialist - minded, and imperialist - corrupted* , has developed into a much stronger section than in our country. That is incontestable. The struggle against the Gomperses, and against the Jouhaux, Hendersons, Merrheims, Legiens and Co. in Western Europe is much more difficult than the struggle against our Mensheviks, who are an *absolutely homogeneous* social and political type. This struggle must be waged ruthlessly, and it must unfailingly be brought—as we brought it—to a point when all the incorrigible leaders of opportunism and social-chauvinism are completely discredited and driven out of the trade unions. Political power cannot be captured (and the attempt to capture it should not be made) until the struggle has reached a *certain* stage. This "certain stage" will be *different* in different countries and in different circumstances; it can be correctly gauged only by thoughtful, experienced and knowledgeable political leaders of the proletariat in each particular country. (In Russia the elections to the Constituent Assembly in November 1917, a few days after the proletarian revolution of October 25, 1917, were one of the criteria of the success of this struggle. In these elections the Mensheviks were utterly defeated; they received 700,000 votes—1,400,000 if the vote in Transcaucasia is added—as against 9,000,000 votes polled by the Bolsheviks. See my article, "The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", [25] in the *Communist International* [26] No. 7–8.)

We are waging a struggle against the "labor aristocracy" in the name of the masses of the workers and in order to win them over to our side; we are waging the struggle against the opportunist and social-chauvinist leaders in order to win the working class over to our side. It would be absurd to forget this most elementary and most self-evident truth. Yet it is this very absurdity that the German "Left" Communists perpetrate when, *because* of

the reactionary and counter-revolutionary character of the trade union *top leadership* , they jump to the conclusion that…we must withdraw from the trade unions, refuse to work in them, and create new and *artificial* forms of labor organization! This is so unpardonable a blunder that it is tantamount to the greatest service Communists could render the bourgeoisie. Like all the opportunist, social-chauvinist, and Kautskyite trade union leaders, our Mensheviks are nothing but "agents of the bourgeoisie in the working-class movement" (as we have always said the Mensheviks are), or "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class", to use the splendid and profoundly true expression of the followers of Daniel De Leon in America. To refuse to work in the reactionary trade unions means leaving the insufficiently developed or backward masses of workers under the influence of the reactionary leaders, the agents of the bourgeoisie, the labor aristocrats, or "workers who have become completely bourgeois" (cf. Engels's letter to Marx in 1858 about the British workers [27]).

This ridiculous "theory" that Communists should not work in reactionary trade unions reveals with the utmost clarity the frivolous attitude of the "Left" Communists towards the question of influencing the "masses", and their misuse of clamor about the "masses". If you want to help the "masses" and win the sympathy and support of the "masses", you should not fear difficulties, or pinpricks, chicanery, insults and persecution from the "leaders" (who, being opportunists and social-chauvinists, are in most cases directly or indirectly connected with the bourgeoisie and the police), but must absolutely *work wherever the masses are to be found* . You must be capable of any sacrifice, of overcoming the greatest obstacles, in order to carry on agitation and propaganda systematically, perseveringly, persistently and patiently in those institutions, societies and associations—even the most reactionary—in which proletarian or semi-proletarian masses are to be found. The trade unions and the workers' cooperatives (the latter sometimes, at least) are the very organizations in which the masses are to be found. According to figures quoted in the Swedish paper *Folkets Dagblad Politiken* of March 10, 1920, the trade union membership in Great Britain increased from 5,500,000 at the end of 1917 to 6,600,000 at the end of 1918, an increase of 19 percent. Towards the close of 1919, the membership was estimated at 7,500,000. I have not got the corresponding figures for France and Germany to hand, but absolutely incontestable and generally

known facts testify to a rapid rise in the trade union membership in these countries too.

These facts make crystal clear something that is confirmed by thousands of other symptoms, namely, that class-consciousness and the desire for organization are growing among the proletarian masses, among the rank and file, among the backward elements. Millions of workers in Great Britain, France and Germany are *for the first time* passing from a complete lack of organization to the elementary, lowest, simplest, and (to those still thoroughly imbued with bourgeois-democratic prejudices) most easily comprehensible form of organization, namely, the trade unions; yet the revolutionary but imprudent Left Communists stand by, crying out "the masses", "the masses!" but *refusing to work within the trade unions* , on the pretext that they are "reactionary", and invent a brand-new, immaculate little "Workers' Union", which is guiltless of bourgeois-democratic prejudices and innocent of craft or narrow-minded craft-union sins, a union which, they claim, will be (!) a broad organization. "Recognition of the Soviet system and the dictatorship" will be the *only* (!) condition of membership. (See the passage quoted above.)

It would be hard to imagine any greater ineptitude or greater harm to the revolution than that caused by the "Left" revolutionaries! Why, if we in Russia today, after two and a half years of unprecedented victories over the bourgeoisie of Russia and the Entente, were to make "recognition of the dictatorship" a condition of trade union membership, we would be doing a very foolish thing, damaging our influence among the masses, and helping the Mensheviks. The task devolving on Communists is to *convince* the backward elements, to work *among* them, and not to *fence themselves off* from them with artificial and childishly "Left" slogans.

There can be no doubt that the Gomperses, the Hendersons, the Jonhaux and the Legiens are very grateful to those "Left" revolutionaries who, like the German opposition "on principle" (heaven preserve us from such "principles"!), or like some of the revolutionaries in the American Industrial Workers of the World [28] advocate quitting the reactionary trade unions and refusing to work in them. These men, the "leaders " of opportunism,

will no doubt resort to every device of bourgeois diplomacy and to the aid of bourgeois governments, the clergy, the police and the courts, to keep Communists out of the trade unions, oust them by every means, make their work in the trade unions as unpleasant as possible, and insult, bait and persecute them. We must be able to stand up to all this, agree to make any sacrifice, and even—if need be—to resort to various stratagems, artifices and illegal methods, to evasions and subterfuges, as long as we get into the trade unions, remain in them, and carry on communist work within them at all costs. Under tsarism we had no "legal opportunities " whatsoever until 1905. However, when Zubatov, agent of the secret police, organized Black-Hundred workers' assemblies and workingmen's societies for the purpose of trapping revolutionaries and combating them, we sent members of our Party to these assemblies and into these societies (I personally remember one of them, Comrade Babushkin, a leading St. Petersburg factory worker, shot by order of the tsar's generals in 1906). They established contacts with the masses, were able to carry on their agitation, and succeeded in wresting workers from the influence of Zubatov's agents. [29] Of course, in Western Europe, which is imbued with most deep-rooted legalistic, constitutionalist and bourgeois-democratic prejudices, this is more difficult to achieve. However, it can and must be carried out, and systematically at that.

The Executive Committee of the Third International must, in my opinion, positively condemn, and call upon the next congress of the Communist International to condemn both the policy of refusing to work in reactionary trade unions in general (explaining in detail why such refusal is unwise, and what extreme harm it does to the cause of the proletarian revolution) and, in particular, the line of conduct of some members of the Communist Party of Holland, who—whether directly or indirectly, overtly or covertly, wholly or partly, it does not matter—have supported this erroneous policy. The Third International must break with the tactics of the Second International, it must not evade or play down points at issue, but must pose them in a straightforward fashion. The whole truth has been put squarely to the "Independents" (the); the whole truth must likewise be put squarely to the "Left" Communists.

Chapter 7: Should We Participate in Bourgeois Parliaments?

It is with the utmost contempt—and the utmost levity—that the German "Left" Communists reply to this question in the negative. Their arguments? In the passage quoted above we read:

"…All reversion to parliamentary forms of struggle, which have become historically and politically obsolete, must be emphatically rejected…"

This is said with ridiculous pretentiousness, and is patently wrong. "Reversion" to parliamentarianism, forsooth! Perhaps there is already a Soviet republic in Germany? It does not look like it! How, then, can one speak of "reversion"? Is this not an empty phrase?

Parliamentarianism has become "historically obsolete". That is true in the propaganda sense. However, everybody knows that this is still a far cry from overcoming it in *practice* . Capitalism could have been declared—and with full justice—to be "historically obsolete" many decades ago, but that does not at all remove the need for a very long and very persistent struggle *on the basis* of capitalism. Parliamentarianism is "historically obsolete" from the standpoint of *world history* , i.e., the *era* of bourgeois parliamentarianism is over, and the *era* of the proletarian dictatorship has *begun* . That is incontestable. But world history is counted in decades. Ten or twenty years earlier or later makes no difference when measured with the yardstick of world history; from the standpoint of world history it is a trifle that cannot be considered even approximately. But for that very reason, it is a glaring theoretical error to apply the yardstick of world history to practical politics.

Is parliamentarianism "politically obsolete"? That is quite a different matter. If that were true, the position of the "Lefts" would be a strong one. But it

has to be proved by a most searching analysis, and the "Lefts" do not even know how to approach the matter. In the "Theses on Parliamentarianism", published in the *Bulletin of the Provisional Bureau in Amsterdam of the Communist International* No. 1, February 1920, and obviously expressing the Dutch-Left or Left-Dutch strivings, the analysis, as we shall see, is also hopelessly poor.

In the first place, contrary to the opinion of such outstanding political leaders as Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, the German "Lefts", as we know, considered parliamentarianism "politically obsolete" even in January 1919. We know that the "Lefts" were mistaken. This fact alone utterly destroys, at a single stroke, the proposition that parliamentarianism is "politically obsolete". It is for the "Lefts" to prove why their error, indisputable at that time, is no longer an error. They do not and cannot produce even a shred of proof. A political party's attitude towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest ways of judging how earnest the party is and how it fulfills *in practice* its obligations towards its *class* and the *working people* . Frankly acknowledging a mistake, ascertaining the reasons for it, analyzing the conditions that have led up to it, and thrashing out the means of its rectification—that is the hallmark of a serious party; that is how it should perform its duties, and how it should educate and train its *class* , and then the *masses* . By failing to fulfill this duty and give the utmost attention and consideration to the study of their patent error, the "Lefts" in Germany (and in Holland) have proved that they are not a *party of a class* , but a circle, not a *party of the masses* , but a group of intellectualists and of a few workers who ape the worst features of intellectualism.

Second, in the same pamphlet of the Frankfurt group of "Lefts", which we have already cited in detail, we read:

"…The millions of workers who still follow the policy of the Centre [the Catholic ' Centre ' Party] are counter-revolutionary. The rural proletarians provide the legions of counter-revolutionary troops." (Page 3 of the pamphlet.)

Everything goes to show that this statement is far too sweeping and exaggerated. But the basic fact set forth here is incontrovertible, and its acknowledgment by the "Lefts" is particularly clear evidence of their mistake. How can one say that "parliamentarianism is politically obsolete", when "millions" and "legions" of *proletarians* are not only still in favor of parliamentarianism in general, but are downright "counter-revolutionary"!? It is obvious that parliamentarianism in Germany is *not yet* politically obsolete. It is obvious that the "Lefts" in Germany have mistaken *their desire* , their politico-ideological attitude, for objective reality. That is a most dangerous mistake for revolutionaries to make. In Russia—where, over a particularly long period and in particularly varied forms, the most brutal and savage yoke of tsarism produced revolutionaries of diverse shades, revolutionaries who displayed amazing devotion, enthusiasm, heroism and will power—in Russia we have observed this mistake of the revolutionaries at very close quarters; we have studied it very attentively and have a first-hand knowledge of it; that is why we can also see it especially clearly in others. Parliamentarianism is of course "politically obsolete" to the Communists in Germany; but—and that is the whole point—we must *not* regard what is obsolete *to us* as something obsolete *to a class* , *to the masses* . Here again we find that the "Lefts" do not know how to reason, do not know how to act as the party of a *class* , as the party of the *masses* . You must not sink to the level of the masses, to the level of the backward strata of the class. That is incontestable. You must tell them the bitter truth. You are duty bound to call their bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary prejudices what they are—prejudices. But at the same time you must *soberly* follow the *actual* state of the class-consciousness and preparedness of the entire class (not only of its communist vanguard), and of all the *working people* (not only of their advanced elements).

Even if only a fairly large *minority* of the industrial workers, and not "millions" and "legions", follow the lead of the Catholic clergy—and a similar minority of rural workers follow the landowners and kulaks (Grossbauern)—it *undoubtedly* signifies that parliamentarianism in Germany has not *yet* politically outlived itself, that participation in parliamentary elections and in the struggle on the parliamentary rostrum is *obligatory* on the party of the revolutionary proletariat *specifically* for the

purpose of educating the backward strata of *its own class* , and for the purpose of awakening and enlightening the undeveloped, downtrodden and ignorant rural *masses* . Whilst you lack the strength to do away with bourgeois parliaments and every other type of reactionary institution, you *must* work within them because *it is there* that you will still find workers who are duped by the priests and stultified by the conditions of rural life; otherwise you risk turning into nothing but windbags.

Third, the "Left" Communists have a great deal to say in praise of us Bolsheviks. One sometimes feels like telling them to praise us less and to try to get a better knowledge of the Bolsheviks' tactics. We took part in the elections to the Constituent Assembly, the Russian bourgeois parliament in September–November 1917. Were our tactics correct or not? If not, then this should be clearly stated and proved, for it is necessary in evolving the correct tactics for international communism. If they were correct, then certain conclusions must be drawn. Of course, there can be no question of placing conditions in Russia on a par with conditions in Western Europe. But as regards the particular question of the meaning of the concept that "parliamentarianism has become politically obsolete", due consideration should be taken of our experience, for unless concrete experience is taken into account such concepts very easily turn into empty phrases. In September–November 1917, did we, the Russian Bolsheviks, not have *more* right than any Western Communists to consider that parliamentarianism was politically obsolete in Russia? Of course we did, for the point is not whether bourgeois parliaments have existed for a long time or a short time, but how far the masses of the working people are *prepared* (ideologically, politically and practically) to accept the Soviet system and to dissolve the bourgeois-democratic parliament (or allow it to be dissolved). It is an absolutely incontestable and fully established historical fact that, in September–November 1917, the urban working class and the soldiers and peasants of Russia were, because of a number of special conditions, exceptionally well prepared to accept the Soviet system and to disband the most democratic of bourgeois parliaments. Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks did *not* boycott the Constituent Assembly, but took part in the elections both before *and after* the proletariat conquered political power. That these elections yielded exceedingly valuable (and to the proletariat, highly useful) political results has, I make bold to hope, been proved by me in the above-

mentioned article, which analyses in detail the returns of the elections to the Constituent Assembly in Russia.

The conclusion which follows from this is absolutely incontrovertible: it has been proved that, far from causing harm to the revolutionary proletariat, participation in a bourgeois-democratic parliament, even a few weeks before the victory of a Soviet republic and even *after* such a victory, actually helps that proletariat to *prove* to the backward masses why such parliaments deserve to be done away with; it *facilitates* their successful dissolution, and *helps* to make bourgeois parliamentarianism "politically obsolete". To ignore this experience, while at the same time claiming affiliation to the Communist *International* , which must work out its tactics internationally (not as narrow or exclusively national tactics, but as international tactics), means committing a gross error and actually abandoning internationalism in deed, while recognizing it in word.

Now let us examine the "Dutch-Left" arguments in favor of non-participation in parliaments. The following is the text of Thesis No. 4, the most important of the above-mentioned "Dutch" theses:

"When the capitalist system of production has broken down, and society is in a state of revolution, parliamentary action gradually loses importance as compared with the action of the masses themselves. When, in these conditions, parliament becomes the center and organ of the counter-revolution, whilst, on the other hand, the laboring class builds up the instruments of its power in the Soviets, it may even prove necessary to abstain from all and any participation in parliamentary action."

The first sentence is obviously wrong, since action by the masses, a big strike, for instance, is more important than parliamentary activity at *all* times, and not only during a revolution or in a revolutionary situation. This obviously untenable and historically and politically incorrect argument merely shows very clearly that the authors completely ignore both the general European experience (the French experience before the revolutions of 1848 and 1870; the German experience of 1878–90, etc.) and the Russian experience (see above) of the importance of *combining* legal and illegal

struggle. This question is of immense importance both in general and in particular, because in *all* civilized and advanced countries the time is rapidly approaching when such a combination will more and more become—and has already partly become—mandatory on the party of the revolutionary proletariat, inasmuch as civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is maturing and is imminent, and because of savage persecution of the Communists by republican governments and bourgeois governments generally, which resort to any violation of legality (the example of America is edifying enough), etc. The Dutch, and the Lefts in general, have utterly failed to understand this highly important question.

The second sentence is, in the first place, historically wrong. We Bolsheviks participated in the most counterrevolutionary parliaments, and experience has shown that this participation was not only useful but indispensable to the party of the revolutionary proletariat, after the first bourgeois revolution in Russia (1905), so as to pave the way for the second bourgeois revolution (February 1917), and then for the socialist revolution (October 1917). In the second place, this sentence is amazingly illogical. If a parliament becomes an organ and a "center" (in reality it never has been and never can be a "center", but that is by the way) of counter-revolution, while the workers are building up the instruments of their power in the form of the Soviets, then it follows that the workers must prepare—ideologically, politically and technically—for the struggle of the Soviets against parliament, for the dispersal of parliament by the Soviets. But it does not at all follow that this dispersal is hindered, or is not facilitated, by the presence of a Soviet opposition *within* the counter-revolutionary parliament. In the course of our victorious struggle against Denikin and Kolchak, we never found that the existence of a Soviet and proletarian opposition in their camp was immaterial to our victories. We know perfectly well that the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly on January 5, 1918 was not hampered but was actually facilitated by the fact that, within the counter-revolutionary Constituent Assembly which was about to be dispersed, there was a consistent Bolshevik, as well as an inconsistent, Left Socialist-Revolutionary Soviet opposition. The authors of the theses are engaged in muddled thinking; they have forgotten the experience of many, if not all, revolutions, which shows the great usefulness, during a revolution, of a *combination* of mass action outside a reactionary parliament with an

opposition sympathetic to (or, better still, directly supporting) the revolution within it. The Dutch, and the "Lefts" in general, argue in this respect like doctrinaires of the revolution, who have never taken part in a real revolution, have never given thought to the history of revolutions, or have naïvely mistaken subjective "rejection" of a reactionary institution for its actual destruction by the combined operation of a number of objective factors. The surest way of discrediting and damaging a new political (and not only political) idea is to reduce it to absurdity on the plea of defending it. For any truth, if "overdone" (as Dietzgen Senior put it), if exaggerated, or if carried beyond the limits of its actual applicability, can be reduced to an absurdity, and is even bound to become an absurdity under these conditions. That is just the kind of disservice the Dutch and German Lefts are rendering to the new truth of the Soviet form of government being superior to bourgeois-democratic parliaments. Of course, anyone would be in error who voiced the outmoded viewpoint or in general considered it impermissible, in all and any circumstances, to reject participation in bourgeois parliaments. I cannot attempt here to formulate the conditions under which a boycott is useful, since the object of this pamphlet is far more modest, namely, to study Russian experience in connection with certain topical questions of international communist tactics. Russian experience has provided us with one successful and correct instance (1905), and another that was incorrect (1906), of the use of a boycott by the Bolsheviks. Analyzing the first case, we, see that we succeeded in *preventing* a reactionary government from *convening* a reactionary parliament in a situation in which extra-parliamentary revolutionary mass action (strikes in particular) was developing at great speed, when not a single section of the proletariat and the peasantry could support the reactionary government in any way, and when the revolutionary proletariat was gaining influence over the backward masses through the strike struggle and through the agrarian movement. It is quite obvious that *this* experience is not applicable to present-day European conditions. It is likewise quite obvious—and the foregoing arguments bear this out—that the advocacy, even if with reservations, by the Dutch and the other "Lefts" of refusal to participate in parliaments is fundamentally wrong and detrimental to the cause of the revolutionary proletariat.

In Western Europe and America, parliament has become most odious to the revolutionary vanguard of the working class. That cannot be denied. It can readily be understood, for it is difficult to imagine anything more infamous, vile or treacherous than the behavior of the vast majority of socialist and Social-Democratic parliamentary deputies during and after the war. It would, however, be not only unreasonable but actually criminal to yield to this mood when deciding *how* this generally recognized evil should be fought. In many countries of Western Europe, the revolutionary mood, we might say, is at present a "novelty", or a "rarity", which has all too long been vainly and impatiently awaited; perhaps that is why people so easily yield to that mood. Certainly, without a revolutionary mood among the masses, and without conditions facilitating the growth of this mood, revolutionary tactics will never develop into action. In Russia, however, lengthy, painful and sanguinary experience has taught us the truth that revolutionary tactics cannot be built on a revolutionary mood alone. Tactics must be based on a sober and strictly objective appraisal of *all* the class forces in a particular state (and of the states that surround it, and of all states the world over) as well as of the experience of revolutionary movements. It is very easy to show one's "revolutionary" temper merely by hurling abuse at parliamentary opportunism, or merely by repudiating participation in parliaments; its very ease, however, cannot turn this into a solution of a difficult, a very difficult, problem. It is far more difficult to create a really revolutionary parliamentary group in a European parliament than it was in Russia. That stands to reason. But it is only a particular expression of the general truth that it was easy for Russia, in the specific and historically unique situation of 1917, to *start* the socialist revolution, but it will be more difficult for Russia than for the European countries to *continue* the revolution and bring it to its consummation. I had occasion to point this out already at the beginning of 1918, and our experience of the past two years has entirely confirmed the correctness of this view. Certain specific conditions, viz., (1) the possibility of linking up the Soviet revolution with the ending, as a consequence of this revolution, of the imperialist war, which had exhausted the workers and peasants to an incredible degree; (2) the possibility of taking temporary advantage of the mortal conflict between the world's two most powerful groups of imperialist robbers, who were unable to unite against their Soviet enemy; (3) the possibility of enduring a

comparatively lengthy civil war, partly owing to the enormous size of the country and to the poor means of communication; (4) the existence of such a profound bourgeois-democratic revolutionary movement among the peasantry that the party of the proletariat was able to adopt the revolutionary demands of the peasant party (the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, the majority of whose members were definitely hostile to Bolshevism) and realize them at once, thanks to the conquest of political power by the proletariat—all these specific conditions do not at present exist in Western Europe, and a repetition of such or similar conditions will not occur so easily. Incidentally, apart from a number of other causes, that is why it is more difficult for Western Europe to *start* a socialist revolution than it was for us. To attempt to "circumvent" this difficulty by "skipping" the arduous job of utilizing reactionary parliaments for revolutionary purposes is absolutely childish. You want to create a new society, yet you fear the difficulties involved in forming a good parliamentary group made up of convinced, devoted and heroic Communists, in a reactionary parliament! Is that not childish? If Karl Liebknecht in Germany and Z. Höglund in Sweden were able, even without mass support from below, to set examples of the truly revolutionary utilization of reactionary parliaments, why should a rapidly growing revolutionary mass party, in the midst of the post-war disillusionment and embitterment of the masses, be unable to *forge* a communist group in the worst of parliaments? It is because, in Western Europe, the backward masses of the workers and—to an even greater degree—of the small peasants are much more imbued with bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary prejudices than they were in Russia because of that, it is *only* from within such institutions as bourgeois parliaments that Communists can (and must) wage a long and persistent struggle, undaunted by any difficulties, to expose, dispel and overcome these prejudices.

The German "Lefts" complain of bad "leaders" in their party, give way to despair, and even arrive at a ridiculous "negation" of "leaders". But in conditions in which it is often necessary to hide "leaders" underground, the *evolution* of good "leaders", reliable, tested and authoritative, is a very difficult matter; these difficulties *cannot* be successfully overcome without combining legal and illegal work, and *without testing the "leaders"* , *among other ways* , in parliaments. Criticism—the most keen, ruthless and

uncompromising criticism—should be directed, not against parliamentarianism or parliamentary activities, but against those leaders who are unable—and still more against those who are *unwilling* —to utilize parliamentary elections and the parliamentary rostrum in a revolutionary and communist manner. Only such criticism—combined, of course, with the dismissal of incapable leaders and their replacement by capable ones—will constitute useful and fruitful revolutionary work that will simultaneously train the "leaders" to be worthy of the working class and of all working people, and train the masses to be able properly to understand the political situation and the often very complicated and intricate tasks that spring from that situation. [30]

Chapter 8: No Compromises?

In the quotation from the Frankfurt pamphlet, we have seen how emphatically the "Lefts" have advanced this slogan. It is sad to see people who no doubt consider themselves Marxists, and want to be Marxists, forget the fundamental truths of Marxism. This is what Engels—who, like Marx, was one of those rarest of authors whose every sentence in every one of their fundamental works contains a remarkably profound content—wrote in 1874, against the manifesto of the thirty-three Blanquist Communards:

"'We are Communists' [the Blanquist Communards wrote in their manifesto], 'because we want to attain our goal without stopping at intermediate stations, without any compromises, which only postpone the day of victory and prolong the period of slavery.'

"The German Communists are Communists because, through all the intermediate stations and all compromises created, not by them but by the course of historical development, they clearly perceive and constantly pursue the final aim—the abolition of classes and the creation of a society in which there will no longer be private ownership of land or of the means of production. The thirty-three Blanquists are Communists just because they imagine that, merely because *they* want to skip the intermediate stations and compromises, the matter is settled, and if 'it begins' in the next few days—which they take for granted—and they take over power, 'communism will be introduced' the day after tomorrow. If that is not immediately possible, they are not Communists.

"What childish innocence it is to present one's own impatience as a theoretically convincing argument!" (Frederick Engels, "Programme of the Blanquist Communards", [31] from the German Social-Democratic newspaper *Volksstaat* , 1874, No. 73, given in the Russian translation of *Articles* , *1871 – 1875* , Petrograd, 1919, pp. 52–53).

In the same article, Engels expresses his profound esteem for Vaillant, and speaks of the "unquestionable merit" of the latter (who, like Guesde, was one of the most prominent leaders of international socialism until their betrayal of socialism in August 1914). But Engels does not fail to give a detailed analysis of an obvious error. Of course, to very young and inexperienced revolutionaries, as well as to petty-bourgeois revolutionaries of even very respectable age and great experience, it seems extremely "dangerous", incomprehensible and wrong to "permit compromises". Many sophists (being unusually or excessively "experienced" politicians) reason exactly in the same way as the British leaders of opportunism mentioned by Comrade Lansbury: "If the Bolsheviks are permitted a certain compromise, why should we not be permitted any kind of compromise?" However, proletarians schooled in numerous strikes (to take only this manifestation of the class struggle) usually assimilate in admirable fashion the very profound truth (philosophical, historical, political and psychological) expounded by Engels. Every proletarian has been through strikes and has experienced "compromises" with the hated oppressors and exploiters, when the workers have had to return to work either without having achieved anything or else agreeing to only a partial satisfaction of their demands. Every proletarian—as a result of the conditions of the mass struggle and the acute intensification of class antagonisms he lives among—sees the difference between a compromise enforced by objective conditions (such as lack of strike funds, no outside support, starvation and exhaustion)—a compromise which in no way minimizes the revolutionary devotion and readiness to carry on the struggle on the part of the workers who have agreed to such a compromise—and, on the other hand, a compromise by traitors who try to ascribe to objective causes their self-interest (strike-breakers also enter into "compromises"!), their cowardice, desire to toady to the capitalists, and readiness to yield to intimidation, sometimes to persuasion, sometimes to sops, and sometimes to flattery from the capitalists. (The history of the British labor movement provides a very large number of instances of such treacherous compromises by British trade union leaders, but, in one form or another, almost all workers in all countries have witnessed the same sort of thing.)

Naturally, there are individual cases of exceptional difficulty and complexity, when the greatest efforts are necessary for a proper assessment of the actual character of this or that "compromise", just as there are cases of homicide when it is by no means easy to establish whether the homicide was fully justified and even necessary (as, for example, legitimate self-defense), or due to unpardonable negligence, or even to a cunningly executed perfidious plan. Of course, in politics, where it is sometimes a matter of extremely complex relations—national and international—between classes and parties, very many cases will arise that will be much more difficult than the question of a legitimate "compromise" in a strike or a treacherous "compromise" by a strike-breaker, treacherous leader, etc. It would be absurd to formulate a recipe or general rule ("No compromises!") to suit all cases. One must use one's own brains and be able to find one's bearings in each particular instance. It is, in fact, one of the functions of a party organization and of party leaders worthy of the name, to acquire, through the prolonged, persistent, variegated and comprehensive efforts of all thinking representatives of a given class, [32] the knowledge, experience and—in addition to knowledge and experience—the political flair necessary for the speedy and correct solution of complex political problems.

Naïve and quite inexperienced people imagine that the permissibility of compromise *in general* is sufficient to obliterate any distinction between opportunism, against which we are waging, and must wage, an unremitting struggle, and revolutionary Marxism, or communism. But if such people do not yet know that in nature and in society *all* distinctions are fluid and up to a certain point conventional, nothing can help them but lengthy training, education, enlightenment, and political and everyday experience. In the practical questions that arise in the politics of any particular or specific historical moment, it is important to single out those which display the principal type of intolerable and treacherous compromises, such as embody an opportunism that is fatal to the revolutionary class, and to exert all efforts to explain them and combat them. During the 1914–18 imperialist war between two groups of equally predatory countries, social-chauvinism was the principal and fundamental type of opportunism, i.e., support of "defense of country", which in *such* a war was really equivalent to defense of the predatory interests of one's "own" bourgeoisie. After the war, defense

of the robber League of Nations, [33] defense of direct or indirect alliances with the bourgeoisie of one's own country against the revolutionary proletariat and the "Soviet" movement, and defense of bourgeois democracy and bourgeois parliamentarianism against "Soviet power" became the principal manifestations of those intolerable and treacherous compromises, whose sum total constituted an opportunism fatal to the revolutionary proletariat and its cause.

"…All compromise with other parties… any policy of maneuvering and compromise must be emphatically rejected,"

the German Lefts write in the Frankfurt pamphlet.

It is surprising that, with such views, these Lefts do not emphatically condemn Bolshevism! After all, the German Lefts cannot but know that the entire history of Bolshevism, both before and after the October Revolution, is *full* of instances of changes of tack, conciliatory tactics and compromises with other parties, including bourgeois parties!

To carry on a war for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie, a war which is a hundred times more difficult, protracted and complex than the most stubborn of ordinary wars between states, and to renounce in advance any change of tack, or any utilization of a conflict of interests (even if temporary) among one's enemies, or any conciliation or compromise with possible allies (even if they are temporary, unstable, vacillating or conditional allies)—is that not ridiculous in the extreme? Is it not like making a difficult ascent of an unexplored and hitherto inaccessible mountain and refusing in advance ever to move in zigzags, ever to retrace one's steps, or ever to abandon a course once selected, and to try others? And yet people so immature and inexperienced (if youth were the explanation, it would not be so bad; young people are preordained to talk such nonsense for a certain period) have met with support—whether direct or indirect, open or covert, whole or partial, it does not matter—from some members of the Communist Party of Holland.

After the first socialist revolution of the proletariat, and the overthrow of the bourgeoisie in some country, the proletariat of that country remains *for a long time weaker* than the bourgeoisie, simply because of the latter's extensive international links, and also because of the spontaneous and continuous restoration and regeneration of capitalism and the bourgeoisie by the small commodity producers of the country which has overthrown the bourgeoisie. The more powerful enemy can be vanquished only by exerting the utmost effort, and by the most thorough, careful, attentive, skilful and *obligatory* use of any, even the smallest, rift between the enemies, any conflict of interests among the bourgeoisie of the various countries and among the various groups or types of bourgeoisie within the various countries, and also by taking advantage of any, even the smallest, opportunity of winning a mass ally, even though this ally is temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional. Those who do not understand this reveal a failure to understand even the smallest grain of Marxism, of modern scientific socialism *in general* . Those who have not proved *in practice* , over a fairly considerable period of time and in fairly varied political situations, their ability to apply this truth in practice have not yet learned to help the revolutionary class in its struggle to emancipate all toiling humanity from the exploiters. And this applies equally to the period *before* and *after* the proletariat has won political power.

Our theory is not a dogma, but a *guide to action* , said Marx and Engels. [34] The greatest blunder, the greatest crime, committed by such "out-and-out" Marxists as Karl Kautsky, Otto Bauer, etc., is that they have not understood this and have been unable to apply it at crucial moments of the proletarian revolution. "Political activity is not like the pavement of Nevsky Prospekt" (the well-kept, broad and level pavement of the perfectly straight principal thoroughfare of St. Petersburg), N. G. Chernyshevsky, the great Russian socialist of the pre-Marxist period, used to say. Since Chernyshevsky's time, disregard or forgetfulness of this truth has cost Russian revolutionaries countless sacrifices. We must strive at all costs to *prevent* the Left Communists and West-European and American revolutionaries that are devoted to the working class from paying *as dearly* as the backward Russians did to learn this truth.

Prior to the downfall of tsarism, the Russian revolutionary Social-Democrats made repeated use of the services of the bourgeois liberals, i.e., they concluded numerous practical compromises with the latter. In 1901–02, even prior to the appearance of Bolshevism, the old editorial board of *Iskra* (consisting of Plekhanov, Axelrod, Zasulich, Martov, Potresov and myself) concluded (not for long, it is true) a formal political alliance with Struve, the political leader of bourgeois liberalism, while at the same time being able to wage an unremitting and most merciless ideological and political struggle against bourgeois liberalism and against the slightest manifestation of its influence in the working-class movement. The Bolsheviks have always adhered to this policy. Since 1905 they have systematically advocated an alliance between the working class and the peasantry, against the liberal bourgeoisie and tsarism, never, however, refusing to support the bourgeoisie against tsarism (for instance, during second rounds of elections, or during second ballots) and never ceasing their relentless ideological and political struggle against the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the bourgeois-revolutionary peasant party, exposing them as petty-bourgeois democrats who have falsely described themselves as socialists. During the Duma elections of 1907, the Bolsheviks entered briefly into a formal political bloc with the Socialist-Revolutionaries. Between 1903 and 1912, there were periods of several years in which we were formally united with the Mensheviks in a single Social-Democratic Party, but we *never stopped* our ideological and political struggle against them as opportunists and vehicles of bourgeois influence on the proletariat. During the war, we concluded certain compromises with the Kautskyites, with the Left Mensheviks (Martov), and with a section of the Socialist-Revolutionaries (Chernov and Natanson); we were together with them at Zimmerwald and Kienthal, [35] and issued joint manifestos. However, we never ceased and never relaxed our ideological and political struggle against the Kautskyites, Martov and Chernov (when Natanson died in 1919, a "Revolutionary-Communist" Narodnik, [36] he was very close to and almost in agreement with us). At the very moment of the October Revolution, we entered into an informal but very important (and very successful) political bloc with the petty-bourgeois peasantry by adopting the *Socialist - Revolutionary* agrarian programme *in its entirety* , without a single alteration—i.e., we effected an undeniable compromise in order to

prove to the peasants that we wanted, not to "steam-roller" them but to reach agreement with them. At the same time we proposed (and soon after effected) a formal political bloc, including participation in the government, with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, who dissolved this bloc after the conclusion of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and then, in July 1918, went to the length of armed rebellion, and subsequently of an armed struggle, against us.

It is therefore understandable why the attacks made by the German Lefts against the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany for entertaining the idea of a bloc with the Independents (the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany—the Kautskyites) are absolutely inane, in our opinion, and clear proof that the "Lefts " are in the *wrong* . In Russia, too, there were Right Mensheviks (participants in the Kerensky government), who corresponded to the German Scheidemanns , and Left Mensheviks (Martov), corresponding to the German Kautskyites and standing in opposition to the Right Mensheviks. A gradual shift of the worker masses from the Mensheviks over to the Bolsheviks was to be clearly seen in 1917. At the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets, held in June 1917, we had only 13 percent of the votes; the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks had a majority. At the Second Congress of Soviets (October 25, 1917, old style) we had 51 percent of the votes. Why is it that in Germany the *same* and absolutely *identical* shift of the workers from Right to Left did not immediately strengthen the Communists, but first strengthened the midway Independent Party, although the latter never had independent political ideas or an independent policy, but merely wavered between the Scheidemanns and the Communists?

One of the evident reasons was the *erroneous* tactics of the German Communists, who must fearlessly and honestly admit this error and learn to rectify it. The error consisted in their denial of the need to take part in the reactionary bourgeois parliaments and in the reactionary trade unions; the error consisted in numerous manifestations of that "Left-wing" infantile disorder which has now come to the surface and will consequently be cured the more thoroughly, the more rapidly and with greater advantage to the organism.

The German Independent Social-Democratic Party is obviously not a homogeneous body. Alongside the old opportunist leaders (Kautsky, Hilferding and apparently, to a considerable extent, Crispien, Ledebour and others)—these have revealed their inability to understand the significance of Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and their inability to lead the proletariat's revolutionary struggle—there has emerged in this party a Left and proletarian wing, which is growing most rapidly. Hundreds of thousands of members of this party (which has, I think, a membership of some three-quarters of a million) are proletarians who are abandoning Scheidemann and are rapidly going over to communism. This proletarian wing has already proposed—at the Leipzig Congress of the Independents (1919)—immediate and unconditional affiliation to the Third International. To fear a "compromise" with this wing of the party is positively ridiculous. On the contrary, it is the *duty* of Communists to seek *and find* a suitable form of compromise with them, a compromise which, on the one hand, will facilitate and accelerate the necessary complete fusion with this wing and, on the other, will in no way hamper the Communists in their ideological and political struggle against the opportunist Right wing of the Independents. It will probably be no easy matter to devise a suitable form of compromise—but only a charlatan could promise the German workers and the German Communists an "easy" road to victory.

Capitalism would not be capitalism if the proletariat *pur sang* were not surrounded by a large number of exceedingly motley types intermediate between the proletarian and the semi-proletarian (who earns his livelihood in part by the sale of his labor-power), between the semi-proletarian and the small peasant (and petty artisan, handicraft worker and small master in general), between the small peasant and the middle peasant, and so on, and if the proletariat itself were not divided into more developed and less developed strata, if it were not divided according to territorial origin, trade, sometimes according to religion, and so on. From all this follows the necessity, the absolute necessity, for the Communist Party, the vanguard of the proletariat, its class-conscious section, to resort to changes of tack, to conciliation and compromises with the various groups of proletarians, with the various parties of the workers and small masters. It is entirely a matter of *knowing how* to apply these tactics in order to *raise* —not lower—the

general level of proletarian class-consciousness, revolutionary spirit, and ability to fight and win. Incidentally, it should be noted that the Bolsheviks' victory over the Mensheviks called for the application of tactics of changes of tack, conciliation and compromises, not only before *but also after* the October Revolution of 1917, but the changes of tack and compromises were, of course, such as assisted, boosted and consolidated the Bolsheviks at the expense of the Mensheviks. The petty-bourgeois democrats (including the Mensheviks) inevitably vacillate between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between bourgeois democracy and the Soviet system, between reformism and revolutionism, between love for the workers and fear of the proletarian dictatorship, etc. The Communists' proper tactics should consist in *utilizing* these vacillations, not ignoring them; utilizing them calls for concessions to elements that are turning towards the proletariat—whenever and in the measure that they turn towards the proletariat—in addition to fighting those who turn towards the bourgeoisie. As a result of the application of the correct tactics, Menshevism began to disintegrate, and has been disintegrating more and more in our country; the stubbornly opportunist leaders are being isolated, and the best of the workers and the best elements among the petty-bourgeois democrats are being brought into our camp. This is a lengthy process, and the hasty "decision"—"No compromises, no maneuvers"—can only prejudice the strengthening of the revolutionary proletariat's influence and the enlargement of its forces.

Lastly, one of the undoubted errors of the German "Lefts " lies in their downright refusal to recognize the Treaty of Versailles. The more "weightily" and "pompously", the more "emphatically" and peremptorily this viewpoint is formulated (by K. Horner, for instance), the less sense it seems to make. It is not enough, under the present conditions of the international proletarian revolution, to repudiate the preposterous absurdities of "National Bolshevism" (Laufenberg and others), which has gone to the length of advocating a bloc with the German bourgeoisie for a war against the Entente. One must realize that it is utterly false tactics to refuse to admit that a Soviet Germany (if a German Soviet republic were soon to arise) would have to recognize the Treaty of Versailles for a time, and to submit to it. From this it does not follow that the Independents—at a time when the Scheidemanns were in the government, when the Soviet

government in Hungary had not yet been overthrown, and when it was still possible that a Soviet revolution in Vienna would support Soviet Hungary—were right, *under the circumstances* , in putting forward the demand that the Treaty of Versailles should be signed. At that time the Independents tacked and maneuvered very clumsily, for they more or less accepted responsibility for the Scheidemann traitors, and more or less backslid from advocacy of a ruthless (and most calmly conducted) class war against the Scheidemanns , to advocacy of a "classless" or "above-class" standpoint.

In the present situation, however, the German Communists should obviously not deprive themselves of freedom of action by giving a positive and categorical promise to repudiate the Treaty of Versailles in the event of communism's victory. That would be absurd. They should say: the Scheidemanns and the Kautskyites have committed a number of acts of treachery hindering (and in part quite ruining) the chances of an alliance with Soviet Russia and Soviet Hungary. We Communists will do all we can to *facilitate* and *pave the way* for such an alliance. However, we are in no way obligated to repudiate the Treaty of Versailles, come what may, or to do so at once. The possibility of its successful repudiation will depend, not only on the German, but also on the international successes of the Soviet movement. The Scheidemanns and the Kautskyites have hampered this movement; we are helping it. That is the gist of the matter; therein lies the fundamental difference. And if our class enemies, the exploiters and their Scheidemann and Kautskyite lackeys, have missed many an opportunity of strengthening both the German and the international Soviet movement, of strengthening both the German and the international Soviet revolution, the blame lies with them. The Soviet revolution in Germany will strengthen the international Soviet movement, which is the strongest bulwark (and the only reliable, invincible and world-wide bulwark) against the Treaty of Versailles and against international imperialism in general. To give absolute, categorical and immediate precedence to liberation from the Treaty of Versailles and to give it *precedence over the question* of liberating *other* countries oppressed by imperialism, from the yoke of imperialism, is philistine nationalism (worthy of the Kautskys, the Hilferdings, the Otto Bauers and Co.), not revolutionary internationalism. The overthrow of the bourgeoisie in any of the large European countries, including Germany, would be such a gain for the international revolution

that, for its sake, one can, and if necessary should, tolerate a *more prolonged existence of the Treaty of Versailles* . If Russia, standing alone, could endure the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk for several months, to the advantage of the revolution, there is nothing impossible in a Soviet Germany, allied with Soviet Russia, enduring the existence of the Treaty of Versailles for a longer period, to the advantage of the revolution.

The imperialists of France, Britain, etc., are trying to provoke and ensnare the German Communists: “Say that you will not sign the Treaty of Versailles!” they urge. Like babes, the Left Communists fall into the trap laid for them, instead of skilfully maneuvering against the crafty and, *at present* , stronger enemy, and instead of telling him, “We shall sign the Treaty of Versailles now.” It is folly, not revolutionism, to deprive ourselves in advance of any freedom of action, openly to inform an enemy who is at present better armed than we are whether we shall fight him, and when. To accept battle at a time when it is obviously advantageous to the enemy, but not to us, is criminal; political leaders of the revolutionary class are absolutely useless if they are incapable of “changing tack, or offering conciliation and compromise” in order to take evasive action in a patently disadvantageous battle.

Chapter 9: “Left-Wing” Communism in Great Britain

There is no Communist Party in Great Britain as yet, but there is a fresh, broad, powerful and rapidly growing communist movement among the workers, which justifies the best hopes. There are several political parties and organizations (the British Socialist Party [37] , the Socialist Labour Party, the South Wales Socialist Society, the Workers’ Socialist Federation [38]), which desire to form a Communist Party and are already negotiating among themselves to this end. In its issue of February 21, 1920, Vol. VI, No. 48, *The Workers’ Dreadnought* , weekly organ of the last of the organizations mentioned, carried an article by the editor, Comrade Sylvia Pankhurst, entitled “Towards a Communist Party”. The article outlines the progress of the negotiations between the four organizations mentioned, for the formation of a united Communist Party, on the basis of affiliation to the Third International, the recognition of the Soviet system instead of parliamentarianism, and the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It appears that one of the greatest obstacles to the immediate formation of a united Communist Party is presented by the disagreement on the questions of participation in Parliament and on whether the new Communist Party should affiliate to the old, trade-unionist, opportunist and social-chauvinist Labour Party, which is mostly made up of trade unions. The Workers’ Socialist Federation and the Socialist Labour Party [39] are opposed to taking part in parliamentary elections and in Parliament, and they are opposed to affiliation to the Labour Party; in this they disagree with all or with most of the members of the British Socialist Party, which they regard as the “Right wing of the Communist parties” in Great Britain. (Page 5, Sylvia Pankhurst’s article.)

Thus, the main division is the same as in Germany, notwithstanding the enormous difference in the forms in which the disagreements manifest themselves (in Germany the form is far closer to the “Russian” than it is in Great Britain), and in a number of other things. Let us examine the arguments of the “Lefts”.

On the question of participation in Parliament, Comrade Sylvia Pankhurst refers to an article in the same issue, by Comrade Gallacher, who writes in the name of the Scottish Workers' Council in Glasgow.

"The above council," he writes, "is definitely anti-parliamentarian, and has behind it the Left wing of the various political bodies. We represent the revolutionary movement in Scotland, striving continually to build up a revolutionary organization within the industries [in various branches of production], and a Communist Party, based on social committees, throughout the country. For a considerable time we have been sparring with the official parliamentarians. We have not considered it necessary to declare open warfare on them, and they are *afraid* to open an attack on us.

"But this state of affairs cannot long continue. We are winning all along the line.

"The rank and file of the I.L.P. in Scotland is becoming more and more disgusted with the thought of Parliament, and the Soviets [the Russian word transliterated into English is used] or Workers' Councils are being supported by almost every branch. This is very serious, of course, for the gentlemen who look to politics for a profession, and they are using any and every means to persuade their members to come back into the parliamentary fold. Revolutionary comrades *must not* [all italics are the author's] give any support to this gang. Our fight here is going to be a difficult one. One of the worst features of it will be the treachery of those whose personal ambition is a more impelling force than their regard for the revolution. Any support given to parliamentarism is simply assisting to put power into the hands of our British Scheidemanns and Noskes. Henderson, Clynes and Co. are hopelessly reactionary. The official I.L.P. is more and more coming under the control of middle-class Liberals, who… have found their 'spiritual home' in the camp of Messrs. MacDonald, Snowden and Co. The official I.L.P. is bitterly hostile to the Third International, the rank and file is for it. Any support to the parliamentary opportunists is simply playing into the hands of the former. The B.S.P. doesn't count at all here… What is wanted here is a sound revolutionary industrial organization, and a Communist

Party working along clear, well-defined, scientific lines. If our comrades can assist us in building these, we will gladly take their help gladly; if they cannot, for God's sake let them keep out altogether, lest they betray the revolution by lending their support to the reactionaries, who are so eagerly clamoring for parliamentary 'honors' (?) [the query mark is the author's] and who are so anxious to prove that they *can rule* as effectively as the 'boss' class politicians themselves."

In my opinion, this letter to the editor expresses excellently the temper and point of view of the young Communists, or of rank-and-file workers who are only just beginning to accept communism. This temper is highly gratifying and valuable; we must learn to appreciate and support it for, in its absence, it would be hopeless to expect the victory of the proletarian revolution in Great Britain, or in any other country for that matter. People who can give expression to this temper of the masses, and are able to evoke such a temper (which is very often dormant, unconscious and latent) among the masses, should be appreciated and given every assistance. At the same time, we must tell them openly and frankly that a state of mind is *by itself* insufficient for leadership of the masses in a great revolutionary struggle, and that the cause of the revolution may well be harmed by certain errors that people who are most devoted to the cause of the revolution are about to commit, or are committing. Comrade Gallacher's letter undoubtedly reveals the rudiments of *all* the mistakes that are being made by the German "Left" Communists and were made by the Russian "Left" Bolsheviks in 1908 and 1918.

The writer of the letter is full of a noble and working-class hatred for the bourgeois "class politicians" (a hatred understood and shared, however, not only by proletarians but by all working people, by all *Kleinen Leuten* to use the German expression). In a representation of the oppressed and exploited masses, this hatred is truly the "beginning of all wisdom", the basis of any socialist and communist movement and of its success. The writer, however, has apparently lost sight of the fact that politics is a science and an art that does not fall from the skies or come gratis, and that, if it wants to overcome the bourgeoisie, the proletariat must train its *own* proletarian "class politicians", of a kind in no way inferior to bourgeois politicians.

The writer of the letter fully realizes that only workers' Soviets, not parliament, can be the instrument enabling the proletariat to achieve its aims; those who have failed to understand this are, of course, out-and-out reactionaries, even if they are most highly educated people, most experienced politicians, most sincere socialists, most erudite Marxists, and most honest citizens and fathers of families. But the writer of the letter does not even ask—it does not occur to him to ask—whether it is possible to bring about the Soviets' victory over parliament without getting pro-Soviet politicians *into* parliament, without disintegrating parliamentarianism from *within* , without working within parliament for the success of the Soviets in their forthcoming task of dispersing parliament. Yet the writer of the letter expresses the absolutely correct idea that the Communist Party in Great Britain must act on *scientific* principles. Science demands, first, that the experience of other countries be taken into account, especially if these other countries, which are also capitalist, are undergoing, or have recently undergone, a very similar experience; second, it demands that account be taken of *all* the forces, groups, parties, classes and masses operating in a given country, and also that policy should not be determined only by the desires and views, by the degree of class-consciousness and the militancy of one group or party alone.

It is true that the Hendersons, the Clyneses, the MacDonalds and the Snowdens are hopelessly reactionary. It is equally true that they want to assume power (though they would prefer a coalition with the bourgeoisie), that they want to "rule" along the old bourgeois lines, and that when they are in power they will certainly behave like the Scheidemanns and Noskes. All that is true. But it does not at all follow that to support them means treachery to the revolution; what does follow is that, in the interests of the revolution, working-class revolutionaries should give these gentlemen a certain amount of parliamentary support. To explain this idea, I shall take two contemporary British political documents: (1) the speech delivered by Prime Minister Lloyd George on March 18, 1920 (as reported in *The Manchester Guardian* of March 19, 1920), and (2) the arguments of a "Left" Communist, Comrade Sylvia Pankhurst, in the article mentioned above.

In his speech Lloyd George entered into a polemic with Asquith (who had been especially invited to this meeting but declined to attend) and with those Liberals who want, not a coalition with the Conservatives, but closer relations with the Labour Party. (In the above-quoted letter, Comrade Gallacher also points to the fact that Liberals are joining the Independent Labour Party.) Lloyd George argued that a coalition—and a *close* coalition at that—between the Liberals and the Conservatives was essential, otherwise there might be a victory for the Labour Party, which Lloyd George prefers to call "Socialist" and which is working for the "common ownership" of the means of production. "It is… known as communism in France," the leader of the British bourgeoisie said, putting it popularly for his audience, Liberal M.P.s who probably never knew it before. In Germany it was called socialism, and in Russia it is called Bolshevism, he went on to say. To Liberals this is unacceptable on principle, Lloyd George explained, because they stand in principle for private property. "Civilization is in jeopardy," the speaker declared, and consequently Liberals and Conservatives must unite…

"…If you go to the agricultural areas," said Lloyd George, "I agree you have the old party divisions as strong as ever. They are removed from the danger. It does not walk their lanes. But when they see it they will be as strong as some of these industrial constituencies are now. Four-fifths of this country is industrial and commercial; hardly one-fifth is agricultural. It is one of the things I have constantly in my mind when I think of the dangers of the future here. In France the population is agricultural, and you have a solid body of opinion which does not move very rapidly, and which is not very easily excited by revolutionary movements. That is not the case here. This country is more top-heavy than any country in the world, and if it begins to rock, the crash here, for that reason, will be greater than in any land."

From this the reader will see that Mr. Lloyd George is not only a very intelligent man, but one who has also learned a great deal from the Marxists. We too have something to learn from Lloyd George.

Of definite interest is the following episode, which occurred in the course of the discussion after Lloyd George's speech:

" *Mr. Wallace, M.P.* : I should like to ask what the Prime Minister considers the effect might be in the industrial constituencies upon the industrial workers, so many of whom are Liberals at the present time and from whom we get so much support. Would not a possible result be to cause an immediate overwhelming accession of strength to the Labour Party from men who at present are our cordial supporters?

" *The Prime Minister* : I take a totally different view. The fact that Liberals are fighting among themselves undoubtedly drives a very considerable number of Liberals in despair to the Labour Party, where you get a considerable body of Liberals, very able men, whose business it is to discredit the Government. The result is undoubtedly to bring a good accession of public sentiment to the Labour Party. It does not go to the Liberals who are outside, it goes to the Labour Party, the by-elections show that."

It may be said, in passing, that this argument shows in particular how muddled even the most intelligent members of the bourgeoisie have become and how they cannot help committing irreparable blunders. That, in fact, is what will bring about the downfall of the bourgeoisie. Our people, however, may commit blunders (provided, of course, that they are not too serious and are rectified in time) and yet in the long run, will prove the victors.

The second political document is the following argument advanced by Comrade Sylvia Pankhurst, a "Left" Communist:

"…Comrade Inkpin [the General Secretary of the British Socialist Party] refers to the Labour Party as 'the main body of the working-class movement'. Another comrade of the British Socialist Party, at the Third International, just held, put the British Socialist Party position more strongly. He said: 'We regard the Labour Party as the organized working class.'

"We do not take this view of the Labour Party. The Labour Party is very large numerically though its membership is to a great extent quiescent and apathetic, consisting of men and women who have joined the trade unions because their workmates are trade unionists, and to share the friendly benefits.

"But we recognize that the great size of the Labour Party is also due to the fact that it is the creation of a school of thought beyond which the majority of the British working class has not yet emerged, though great changes are at work in the mind of the people which will presently alter this state of affairs…

"The British Labour Party, like the social-patriotic organizations of other countries, will, in the natural development of society, inevitably come into power. It is for the Communists to build up the forces that will overthrow the social patriots, and in this country we must not delay or falter in that work.

"We must not dissipate our energy in adding to the strength of the Labour Party; its rise to power is inevitable. We must concentrate on making a communist movement that will vanquish it. The Labour Party will soon be forming a government, the revolutionary opposition must make ready to attack it…"

Thus the liberal bourgeoisie are abandoning the historical system of "two parties" (of exploiters), which has been hallowed by centuries of experience and has been extremely advantageous to the exploiters, and consider it necessary for these two parties to join forces against the Labour Party. A number of Liberals are deserting to the Labour Party like rats from a sinking ship. The Left Communists believe that the transfer of power to the Labour Party is inevitable and admit that it now has the backing of most workers. From this they draw the strange conclusion which Comrade Sylvia Pankhurst formulates as follows:

“The Communist Party must not compromise… The Communist Party must keep its doctrine pure, and its independence of reformism inviolate, its mission is to lead the way, without stopping or turning, by the direct road to the communist revolution.”

On the contrary, the fact that most British workers still follow the lead of the British Kerenskys or Scheidemanns and have not yet had experience of a government composed of these people—an experience which was necessary in Russia and Germany so as to secure the mass transition of the workers to communism—undoubtedly indicates that the British Communists *should* participate in parliamentary action, that they should, from *within* parliament, help the masses of the workers see the results of a Henderson and Snowden government in practice, and that they should help the Hendersons and Snowdens defeat the united forces of Lloyd George and Churchill. To act otherwise would mean hampering the cause of the revolution, since revolution is impossible without a change in the views of the majority of the working class, a change brought about by the political experience of the masses, never by propaganda alone. “To lead the way without compromises, without turning”—this slogan is obviously wrong if it comes from a patently impotent minority of the workers who know (or at all events should know) that given a Henderson and Snowden victory over Lloyd George and Churchill, the majority will soon become disappointed in their leaders and will begin to support communism (or at all events will adopt an attitude of neutrality, and, in the main, of sympathetic neutrality, towards the Communists). It is as though 10,000 soldiers were to hurl themselves into battle against an enemy force of 50,000, when it would be proper to “halt”, “take evasive action”, or even effect a “compromise” so as to gain time until the arrival of the 100,000 reinforcements that are on their way but cannot go into action immediately. That is intellectualist childishness, not the serious tactics of a revolutionary class.

The fundamental law of revolution, which has been confirmed by all revolutions and especially by all three Russian revolutions in the twentieth century, is as follows: for a revolution to take place it is not enough for the exploited and oppressed masses to realize the impossibility of living in the old way, and demand changes; for a revolution to take place it is essential

that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way. It is only when the " *lower classes* " *do not want* to live in the old way and the "upper classes" *cannot carry on in the old way* that the revolution can triumph. This truth can be expressed in other words: revolution is impossible without a nation-wide crisis (affecting both the exploited and the exploiters). It follows that, for a revolution to take place, it is essential, first, that a majority of the workers (or at least a majority of the class-conscious, thinking, and politically active workers) should fully realize that revolution is necessary, and that they should be prepared to die for it; second, that the ruling classes should be going through a governmental crisis, which draws even the most backward masses into politics (symptomatic of any genuine revolution is a rapid, tenfold and even hundredfold increase in the size of the working and oppressed masses—hitherto apathetic—who are capable of waging the political struggle), weakens the government, and makes it possible for the revolutionaries to rapidly overthrow it.

Incidentally, as can also be seen from Lloyd George's speech, both conditions for a successful proletarian revolution are clearly maturing in Great Britain. The errors of the Left Communists are particularly dangerous at present, because certain revolutionaries are not displaying a sufficiently thoughtful, sufficiently attentive, sufficiently intelligent and sufficiently shrewd attitude toward each of these conditions. If we are the party of the revolutionary *class* , and not merely a revolutionary group, and if we want the *masses* to follow us (and unless we achieve that, we stand the risk of remaining mere windbags), we must, first, help Henderson or Snowden to beat Lloyd George and Churchill (or, rather, compel the former to beat the latter, because the former *are afraid of their victory!*); second, we must help the majority of the working class to be convinced by their own experience that we are right, i.e., that the Hendersons and Snowdens are absolutely good for nothing, that they are petty-bourgeois and treacherous by nature, and that their bankruptcy is inevitable; third, we must bring nearer the moment when, *on the basis* of the disappointment of most of the workers in the Hendersons, it will be possible, with serious chances of success, to overthrow the government of the Hendersons at once; because if the most astute and solid Lloyd George, that big, not petty, bourgeois, is displaying consternation and is more and more weakening himself (and the bourgeoisie as a whole) by his "friction" with Churchill today and with

Asquith tomorrow, how much greater will be the consternation of a Henderson government!

I will put it more concretely. In my opinion, the British Communists should unite their four parties and groups (all very weak, and some of them very, very weak) into a single Communist Party on the basis of the principles of the Third International and of *obligatory* participation in parliament. The Communist Party should propose the following "compromise" election agreement to the Hendersons and Snowdens: let us jointly fight against the alliance between Lloyd George and the Conservatives; let us share parliamentary seats in proportion to the number of workers' votes polled for the Labour Party and for the Communist Party (not in elections, but in a special ballot), and let us retain *complete freedom* of agitation, propaganda and political activity. Of course, without this latter condition, we cannot agree to a bloc, for that would be treachery; the British Communists must demand and get complete freedom to expose the Hendersons and the Snowdens in the same way as (*for fifteen years* —1903–17) the Russian Bolsheviks demanded and got it in respect of the Russian Hendersons and Snowdens, i.e., the Mensheviks.

If the Hendersons and the Snowdens accept a bloc on these terms, we shall be the gainers, because the number of parliamentary seats is of no importance to us; we are not out for seats. We shall yield on this point (whilst the Hendersons and especially their new friends—or new masters — the Liberals who have joined the Independent Labour Party are most eager to get seats). We shall be the gainers, because we shall carry *our* agitation among the *masses* at a time when Lloyd George *himself* has "incensed" them, and we shall not only be helping the Labour Party to establish its government sooner, but shall also be helping the masses sooner to understand the communist propaganda that we shall carry on against the Hendersons, without any reticence or omission.

If the Hendersons and the Snowdens reject a bloc with us on these terms, we shall gain still more, for we shall at once have shown the *masses* (note that, even in the purely Menshevik and completely opportunist Independent Labour Party, the *rank and file* are in favor of Soviets) that the Hendersons

prefer *their* close relations with the capitalists to the unity of all the workers. We shall immediately gain in the eyes of the *masses* , who, particularly after the brilliant, highly correct and highly useful (to communism) explanations given by Lloyd George, will be sympathetic to the idea of uniting all the workers against the Lloyd George-Conservative alliance. We shall gain immediately, because we shall have demonstrated to the masses that the Hendersons and the Snowdens are afraid to beat Lloyd George, afraid to assume power alone, and are striving to secure the *secret* support of Lloyd George, who is *openly* extending a hand to the Conservatives, against the Labour Party. It should be noted that in Russia, after the revolution of February 27, 1917 (old style), the Bolsheviks' propaganda against the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries (i.e., the Russian Hendersons and Snowdens) derived benefit precisely from a circumstance of this kind. We said to the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries: assume full power without the bourgeoisie, because you have a majority in the Soviets (at the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets, in June 1917, the Bolsheviks had only 13 percent of the votes). But the Russian Hendersons and Snowdens were afraid to assume power without the bourgeoisie, and when the bourgeoisie held up the elections to the Constituent Assembly, knowing full well that the elections would give a majority to the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks [40] (who formed a close political bloc and in fact represented *only* petty-bourgeois democracy), the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks were unable energetically and consistently to oppose these delays.

If the Hendersons and the Snowdens reject a bloc with the Communists, the latter will immediately gain by winning the sympathy of the masses and discrediting the Hendersons and Snowdens; if, as a result, we do lose a few parliamentary seats, it is a matter of no significance to us. We would put up our candidates in a very few but absolutely safe constituencies, namely, constituencies where our candidatures would not give any seats to the Liberals at the expense of the Labour candidates. We would take part in the election campaign, distribute leaflets agitating for communism, and, in *all* constituencies where we have no candidates, we would urge the electors *to vote for the Labour candidate and against the bourgeois candidate* . Comrades Sylvia Pankhurst and Gallacher are mistaken in thinking that this is a betrayal of communism, or a renunciation of the struggle against the

social-traitors. On the contrary, the cause of communist revolution would undoubtedly gain thereby.

At present, British Communists very often find it hard even to approach the masses, and even to get a hearing from them. If I come out as a Communist and call upon them to vote for Henderson and against Lloyd George, they will certainly give me a hearing. And I shall be able to explain in a popular manner, not only why the Soviets are better than a parliament and why the dictatorship of the proletariat is better than the dictatorship of Churchill (disguised with the signboard of bourgeois "democracy"), but also that, with my vote, I want to support Henderson in the same way as the rope supports a hanged man—that the impending establishment of a government of the Hendersons will prove that I am right, will bring the masses over to my side, and will hasten the political death of the Hendersons and the Snowdens just as was the case with their kindred spirits in Russia and Germany.

If the objection is raised that these tactics are too "subtle" or too complex for the masses to understand, that these tactics will split and scatter our forces, will prevent us from concentrating them on Soviet revolution, etc., I will reply to the "Left" objectors: don't ascribe your doctrinairism to the masses! The masses in Russia are no doubt no better educated than the masses in Britain; if anything, they are less so. Yet the masses understood the Bolsheviks, and the fact that, in September 1917, *on the eve* of the Soviet revolution, the Bolsheviks put up their candidates for a bourgeois parliament (the Constituent Assembly) and *on the day after* the Soviet revolution, in November 1917, took part in the elections to this Constituent Assembly, which they got rid of on January 5, 1918—this did not hamper the Bolsheviks, but, on the contrary, helped them.

I cannot deal here with the second point of disagreement among the British Communists—the question of affiliation or non-affiliation to the Labour Party. I have too little material at my disposal on this question, which is highly complex because of the unique character of the British Labour Party, whose very structure is so unlike that of the political parties usual in the European continent. It is beyond doubt, however, first, that in this

question, too, those who try to deduce the tactics of the revolutionary proletariat from principles such as: “The Communist Party must keep its doctrine pure, and its independence of reformism inviolate; its mission is to lead the way, without stopping or turning, by the direct road to the communist revolution”—will inevitably fall into error. Such principles are merely a repetition of the mistake made by the French Blanquist Communards, who, in 1874, “repudiated” all compromises and all intermediate stages. Second, it is beyond doubt that, in this question too, as always, the task consists in learning to apply the general and basic principles of communism to the *specific relations* between classes and parties, to the *specific features* in the objective development towards communism, which are different in each country and which we must be able to discover, study, and predict.

This, however, should be discussed, not in connection with British communism alone, but in connection with the general conclusions concerning the development of communism in all capitalist countries. We shall now proceed to deal with this subject.

Chapter 10: Several Conclusions

The Russian bourgeois revolution of 1905 revealed a highly original turn in world history: in one of the most backward capitalist countries, the strike movement attained a scope and power unprecedented anywhere in the world. In the *first month* of 1905 *alone* , the number of strikers was ten times the *annual* average for the previous decade (1895–1904); from January to October 1905, strikes grew all the time and reached enormous proportions. Under the influence of a number of unique historical conditions, backward Russia was the first to show the world, not only the growth, by leaps and bounds, of the independent activity of the oppressed masses in time of revolution (this had occurred in all great revolutions), but also that the significance of the proletariat is infinitely greater than its proportion in the total population; it showed a combination of the economic strike and the political strike, with the latter developing into an armed uprising, and the birth of the Soviets, a new form of mass struggle and mass organization of the classes oppressed by capitalism.

The revolutions of February and October 1917 led to the all-round development of the Soviets on a nation-wide scale and to their victory in the proletarian socialist revolution. In less than two years, the international character of the Soviets, the spread of this form of struggle and organization to the world working-class movement and the historical mission of the Soviets as the grave-digger, heir and successor of bourgeois parliamentarianism and of bourgeois democracy in general, all became clear.

But that is not all. The history of the working-class movement now shows that, in all countries, it is about to go through (and is already going through) a struggle waged by communism—emergent, gaining strength and advancing towards victory—against, primarily, Menshevism, i.e., opportunism and social-chauvinism (the home brand in each particular country), and then as a complement, so to say, Left-wing communism. The

former struggle has developed in all countries, apparently without any exception, as a duel between the Second International (already virtually dead) and the Third International. The latter struggle is to be seen in Germany, Great Britain, Italy, America (at any rate, a certain *section* of the Industrial Workers of the World and of the anarcho-syndicalist trends uphold the errors of Left-wing communism alongside of an almost universal and almost unreserved acceptance of the Soviet system), and in France (the attitude of a section of the former syndicalists towards the political party and parliamentarianism, also alongside of the acceptance of the Soviet system); in other words, the struggle is undoubtedly being waged, not only on an international, but even on a worldwide scale.

But while the working-class movement is everywhere going through what is actually the same kind of preparatory school for victory over the bourgeoisie, it is achieving that development in its *own way* in each country. The big and advanced capitalist countries are traveling this road *far more rapidly* than did Bolshevism, to which history granted fifteen years to prepare itself for victory, as an organized political trend. In the brief space of a year, the Third International has already scored a decisive victory; it has defeated the yellow, social-chauvinist Second International, which only a few months ago was incomparably stronger than the Third International, seemed stable and powerful, and enjoyed every possible support—direct and indirect, material (Cabinet posts, passports, the press) and ideological—from the world bourgeoisie.

It is now essential that Communists of every country should quite consciously take into account both the fundamental objectives of the struggle against opportunism and "Left" doctrinairism, and the *concrete features* which this struggle assumes and must inevitably assume in each country, in conformity with the specific character of its economics, politics, culture, and national composition (Ireland, etc.), its colonies, religious divisions, and so on and so forth. Dissatisfaction with the Second International is felt everywhere and is spreading and growing, both because of its opportunism and because of its inability or incapacity to create a really centralized and really leading center capable of directing the international tactics of the revolutionary proletariat in its struggle for a

world Soviet republic. It should be clearly realized that such a leading center can never be built up on stereotyped, mechanically equated, and identical tactical rules of struggle. As long as national and state distinctions exist among peoples and countries—and these will continue to exist for a very long time to come, even after the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established on a world-wide scale—the unity of the international tactics of the communist working-class movement in all countries demands, not the elimination of variety or the suppression of national distinctions (which is a pipe dream at present), but an application of the *fundamental* principles of communism (Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat), which will *correctly modify* these principles in certain *particulars* , correctly adapt and apply them to national and national-state distinctions. To seek out, investigate, predict, and grasp that which is nationally specific and nationally distinctive, in the *concrete manner* in which each country should tackle a *single* international task: victory over opportunism and Left doctrinairism within the working-class movement; the overthrow of the bourgeoisie; the establishment of a Soviet republic and a proletarian dictatorship—such is the basic task in the historical period that all the advanced countries (and not they alone) are going through. The chief thing—though, of course, far from everything—the chief thing, has already been achieved: the vanguard of the working class has been won over, has ranged itself on the side of Soviet government and against parliamentarianism, on the side of the dictatorship of the proletariat and against bourgeois democracy. All efforts and all attention should now be concentrated on the *next* step, which may seem—and from a certain viewpoint actually is —less fundamental, but, on the other hand, is actually closer to a practical accomplishment of the task. That step is: the search after forms of the *transition* or the *approach* to the proletarian revolution.

The proletarian vanguard has been won over ideologically. That is the main thing. Without this, not even the first step towards victory can be made. But that is still quite a long way from victory. Victory cannot be won with a vanguard alone. To throw only the vanguard into the decisive battle, before the entire class, the broad masses, have taken up a position either of direct support for the vanguard, or at least of sympathetic neutrality towards it and of precluded support for the enemy, would be, not merely foolish but criminal. Propaganda and agitation alone are not enough for an entire class,

the broad masses of the working people, those oppressed by capital, to take up such a stand. For that, the masses must have their own political experience. Such is the fundamental law of all great revolutions, which has been confirmed with compelling force and vividness, not only in Russia but in Germany as well. To turn resolutely towards communism, it was necessary, not only for the ignorant and often illiterate masses of Russia, but also for the literate and well-educated masses of Germany, to realize from their own bitter experience the absolute impotence and spinelessness, the absolute helplessness and servility to the bourgeoisie, and the utter vileness of the government of the paladins of the Second International; they had to realize that a dictatorship of the extreme reactionaries (Kornilov [41] in Russia; Kapp [42] and Co. in Germany) is inevitably the only alternative to a dictatorship of the proletariat.

The immediate objective of the class-conscious vanguard of the international working-class movement, i.e., the Communist parties, groups and trends, is to be able to *lead* the broad masses (who are still, for the most part, apathetic, inert, dormant and convention-ridden) to their new position, or, rather, to be able to lead, *not only* their own party but also these masses in their advance and transition to the new position. While the first historical objective (that of winning over the class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat to the side of Soviet power and the dictatorship of the working class) could not have been reached without a complete ideological and political victory over opportunism and social-chauvinism, the second and immediate objective, which consists in being able to lead the *masses* to a new position ensuring the victory of the vanguard in the revolution, cannot be reached without the liquidation of Left doctrinairism, and without a full elimination of its errors.

As long as it was (and inasmuch as it still is) a question of winning the proletariat's vanguard over to the side of communism, priority went and still goes to propaganda work; even propaganda circles, with all their parochial limitations, are useful under these conditions, and produce good results. But when it is a question of practical action by the masses, of the disposition, if one may so put it, of vast armies, of the alignment of *all* the class forces in a given society *for the final and decisive battle* , then propagandist methods

alone, the mere repetition of the truths of "pure" communism, are of no avail. In these circumstances, one must not count in thousands, like the propagandist belonging to a small group that has not yet given leadership to the masses; in these circumstances one must count in millions and tens of millions. In these circumstances, we must ask ourselves, not only whether we have convinced the vanguard of the revolutionary class, but also whether the historically effective forces of *all* classes—positively of all the classes in a given society, without exception—are arrayed in such a way that the decisive battle is at hand—in such a way that: (1) all the class forces hostile to us have become sufficiently entangled, are sufficiently at loggerheads with each other, have sufficiently weakened themselves in a struggle which is beyond their strength; (2) all the vacillating and unstable, intermediate elements—the petty bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois democrats, as distinct from the bourgeoisie—have sufficiently exposed themselves in the eyes of the people, have sufficiently disgraced themselves through their practical bankruptcy, and (3) among the proletariat, a mass sentiment favoring the most determined, bold and dedicated revolutionary action against the bourgeoisie has emerged and begun to grow vigorously. Then revolution is indeed ripe; then, indeed, if we have correctly gauged all the conditions indicated and summarized above, and if we have chosen the right moment, our victory is assured.

The differences between the Churchills and the Lloyd Georges —with insignificant national distinctions, these political types exist in *all* countries —on the one hand, and between the Hendersons and the Lloyd Georges on the other, are quite minor and unimportant from the standpoint of pure (i.e., abstract) communism, i.e., communism that has not yet matured to the stage of practical political action by the masses. However, from the standpoint of this practical action by the masses, these differences are most important. To take due account of these differences, and to determine the moment when the inevitable conflicts between these " friends" , which weaken and enfeeble *all the* " *friends* " *taken together* , will have come to a head—that is the concern, the task, of a Communist who wants to be, not merely a class-conscious and convinced propagandist of ideas, but a practical leader of the *masses* in the revolution. It is necessary to link the strictest devotion to the ideas of communism with the ability to effect all the necessary practical compromises, tacks, conciliatory maneuvers, zigzags, retreats and

so on, in order to speed up the achievement and then loss of political power by the Hendersons (the heroes of the Second International, if we are not to name individual representatives of petty-bourgeois democracy who call themselves socialists); to accelerate their inevitable bankruptcy in practice, which will enlighten the masses in the spirit of our ideas, in the direction of communism; to accelerate the inevitable friction, quarrels, conflicts and complete disintegration among the Hendersons, the Lloyd Georges and the Churchills (the Mensheviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Constitutional-Democrats, the monarchists; the Scheidemanns , the bourgeoisie and the Kappists, etc.); to select the proper moment when the discord among these "pillars of sacrosanct private property" is at its height, so that, through a decisive offensive, the proletariat will defeat them all and capture political power.

History as a whole, and the history of revolutions in particular, is always richer in content, more varied, more multiform, more lively and ingenious than is imagined by even the best parties, the most class-conscious vanguards of the most advanced classes. This can readily be understood, because even the finest of vanguards express the class-consciousness, will, passion and imagination of tens of thousands, whereas at moments of great upsurge and the exertion of all human capacities, revolutions are made by the class-consciousness, will, passion and imagination of tens of millions, spurred on by a most acute struggle of classes. Two very important practical conclusions follow from this: first, that in order to accomplish its task the revolutionary class must be able to master *all* forms or aspects of social activity without exception (completing after the capture of political power —sometimes at great risk and with very great danger—what it did not complete before the capture of power); second, that the revolutionary class must be prepared for the most rapid and brusque replacement of one form by another.

One will readily agree that any army which does not train to use all the weapons, all the means and methods of warfare that the enemy possesses, or may possess, is behaving in an unwise or even criminal manner. This applies to politics even more than it does to the art of war. In politics it is even harder to know in advance which methods of struggle will be

applicable and to our advantage in certain future conditions. Unless we learn to apply all the methods of struggle, we may suffer grave and sometimes even decisive defeat, if changes beyond our control in the position of the other classes bring to the forefront a form of activity in which we are especially weak. If, however, we learn to use all the methods of struggle, victory will be certain, because we represent the interests of the really foremost and really revolutionary class, even if circumstances do not permit us to make use of weapons that are most dangerous to the enemy, weapons that deal the swiftest mortal blows. Inexperienced revolutionaries often think that legal methods of struggle are opportunist because, in this field, the bourgeoisie has most frequently deceived and duped the workers (particularly in "peaceful" and non-revolutionary times), while illegal methods of struggle are revolutionary. That, however, is wrong. The truth is that those parties and leaders are opportunists and traitors to the working class that are unable or unwilling (do not say, "I can't"; say, "I shan't") to use illegal methods of struggle in conditions such as those which prevailed, for example, during the imperialist war of 1914–18, when the bourgeoisie of the freest democratic countries most brazenly and brutally deceived the workers, and smothered the truth about the predatory character of the war. But revolutionaries who are incapable of combining illegal forms of struggle with *every* form of legal struggle are poor revolutionaries indeed. It is not difficult to be a revolutionary when revolution has already broken out and is in spate, when all people are joining the revolution just because they are carried away, because it is the vogue, and sometimes even from careerist motives. After its victory, the proletariat has to make strenuous efforts, even the most painful, so as to "liberate" itself from such pseudo-revolutionaries. It is far more difficult—and far more precious—to be a revolutionary when the conditions for direct, open, really mass and really revolutionary struggle *do not yet exist* , to be able to champion the interests of the revolution (by propaganda, agitation and organization) in non-revolutionary bodies, and quite often in downright reactionary bodies, in a non-revolutionary situation, among the masses who are incapable of immediately appreciating the need for revolutionary methods of action. To be able to seek, find and correctly determine the specific path or the particular turn of events that will *lead* the masses to the real, decisive and final revolutionary struggle—such is the main objective of communism in Western Europe and in America today.

Britain is an example. We cannot tell—no one can tell in advance—how soon a real proletarian revolution will flare up there, and *what immediate cause* will most serve to rouse, kindle, and impel into the struggle the very wide masses, who are still dormant. Hence, it is our duty to carry on all our preparatory work in such a way as to be "well shod on all four feet" (as the late Plekhanov, when he was a Marxist and revolutionary, was fond of saying). It is possible that the breach will be forced, the ice broken, by a parliamentary crisis, or by a crisis arising from colonial and imperialist contradictions, which are hopelessly entangled and are becoming increasingly painful and acute, or perhaps by some third cause, etc. We are not discussing the kind of struggle that will *determine* the fate of the proletarian revolution in Great Britain (no Communist has any doubt on that score; for all of us this is a foregone conclusion): what we are discussing is the *immediate cause* that will bring into motion the now dormant proletarian masses, and lead them right up to revolution. Let us not forget that in the French bourgeois republic, for example, in a situation which, from both the international and the national viewpoints, was a hundred times less revolutionary than it is today, such an "unexpected" and "petty" cause as one of the many thousands of fraudulent machinations of the reactionary military caste (the Dreyfus case [43]) was enough to bring the people to the brink of civil war!

In Great Britain the Communists should constantly, unremittingly and unswervingly utilize parliamentary elections and all the vicissitudes of the Irish, colonial and world-imperialist policy of the British Government, and all other fields, spheres and aspects of public life, and work in all of them in a new way, in a communist way, in the spirit of the Third, not the Second, International. I have neither the time nor the space here to describe the "Russian" "Bolshevik" methods of participation in parliamentary elections and in the parliamentary struggle; I can, however, assure foreign Communists that they were quite unlike the usual West-European parliamentary campaigns. From this the conclusion is often drawn: "Well, that was in Russia, in our country parliamentarianism is different." This is a false conclusion. Communists, adherents of the Third International in all countries, exist for the purpose of *changing* — all along the line, in all spheres of life—the old socialist, trade unionist, syndicalist, and

parliamentary type of work into a *new* type of work, the communist. In Russia, too, there was always an abundance of opportunism, purely bourgeois sharp practices and capitalist rigging in the elections. In Western Europe and in America, the Communist must learn to create a new, uncustomary, non-opportunist, and non-careerist parliamentarianism; the Communist parties must issue their slogans; true proletarians, with the help of the unorganized and downtrodden poor, should distribute leaflets, canvas workers' houses and cottages of the rural proletarians and peasants in the remote villages (fortunately there are many times fewer remote villages in Europe than in Russia, and in Britain the number is very small); they should go into the public houses, penetrate into unions, societies and chance gatherings of the common people, and speak to the people, not in learned (or very parliamentary) language, they should not at all strive to "get seats" in parliament, but should everywhere try to get people to think, and draw the masses into the struggle, to take the bourgeoisie at its word and utilize the machinery it has set up, the elections it has appointed, and the appeals it has made to the people; they should try to explain to the people what Bolshevism is, in a way that was never possible (under bourgeois rule) outside of election times (exclusive, of course, of times of big strikes, when in Russia a *similar* apparatus for widespread popular agitation worked even more intensively). It is very difficult to do this in Western Europe and extremely difficult in America, but it can and must be done, for the objectives of communism cannot be achieved without effort. We must work to accomplish *practical* tasks, ever more varied and ever more closely connected with all branches of social life, winning branch after branch, and sphere after sphere *from the bourgeoisie* .

In Great Britain, further, the work of propaganda, agitation and organization among the armed forces and among the oppressed and underprivileged nationalities in their "own" state (Ireland, the colonies) must also be tackled in a new fashion (one that is not socialist, but communist; not reformist, but revolutionary). That is because, in the era of imperialism in general and especially today after a war that was a sore trial to the peoples and has quickly opened their eyes to the truth (i.e., the fact that tens of millions were killed and maimed for the sole purpose of deciding whether the British or the German robbers should plunder the largest number of countries), all these spheres of social life are heavily charged with inflammable material

and are creating numerous causes of conflicts, crises and an intensification of the class struggle. We do not and cannot know which spark—of the innumerable sparks that are flying about in all countries as a result of the world economic and political crisis—will kindle the conflagration, in the sense of raising up the masses; we must, therefore, with our new and communist principles, set to work to stir up all and sundry, even the oldest, mustiest and seemingly hopeless spheres, for otherwise we shall not be able to cope with our tasks, shall not be comprehensively prepared, shall not be in possession of all the weapons and shall not prepare ourselves either to gain victory over the bourgeoisie (which arranged all aspects of social life —and has now disarranged them—in its bourgeois fashion), or to bring about the impending communist reorganization of every sphere of life, following that victory.

Since the proletarian revolution in Russia and its victories on an international scale, expected neither by the bourgeoisie nor the philistines, the entire world has become different, and the bourgeoisie everywhere has become different too. It is terrified of "Bolshevism", exasperated by it almost to the point of frenzy, and for that very reason it is, on the one hand, precipitating the progress of events and, on the other, concentrating on the forcible suppression of Bolshevism, thereby weakening its own position in a number of other fields. In their tactics the Communists in all the advanced countries must take both these circumstances into account.

When the Russian Cadets and Kerensky began furiously to hound the Bolsheviks—especially since April 1917, and more particularly in June and July 1917—they overdid things. Millions of copies of bourgeois papers, clamoring in every key against the Bolsheviks, helped the masses to make an appraisal of Bolshevism; apart from the newspapers, all public life was full of discussions about Bolshevism, as a result of the bourgeoisie's "zeal". Today the millionaires of all countries are behaving on an international scale in a way that deserves our heartiest thanks. They are hounding Bolshevism with the same zeal as Kerensky and Co. did; they, too, are overdoing things and *helping* us just as Kerensky did. When the French bourgeoisie makes Bolshevism the central issue in the elections, and accuses the comparatively moderate or vacillating socialists of being

Bolsheviks; when the American bourgeoisie, which has completely lost its head, seizes thousands and thousands of people on suspicion of Bolshevism, creates an atmosphere of panic, and broadcasts stories of Bolshevik plots; when, despite all its wisdom and experience, the British bourgeoisie—the most "solid" in the world—makes incredible blunders, founds richly endowed "anti-Bolshevik societies", creates a special literature on Bolshevism, and recruits an extra number of scientists, agitators and clergymen to combat it, we must salute and thank the capitalists. They are working for us. They are helping us to get the masses interested in the essence and significance of Bolshevism, and they cannot do otherwise, for they have *already* failed to ignore Bolshevism and stifle it.

But at the same time, the bourgeoisie sees practically only one aspect of Bolshevism—insurrection, violence, and terror; it therefore strives to prepare itself for resistance and opposition primarily in *this* field. It is possible that, in certain instances, in certain countries, and for certain brief periods, it will succeed in this. We must reckon with such an eventuality, and we have absolutely nothing to fear if it does succeed. Communism is emerging in positively every sphere of public life; its beginnings are to be seen literally on all sides. The "contagion" (to use the favorite metaphor of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois police, the one mostly to their liking) has very thoroughly penetrated the organism and has completely permeated it. If special efforts are made to block one of the channels, the "contagion" will find another one, sometimes very unexpectedly. Life will assert itself. Let the bourgeoisie rave, work itself into a frenzy, go to extremes, commit follies, take vengeance on the Bolsheviks in advance, and endeavor to kill off (as in India, Hungary, Germany, etc.) more hundreds, thousands, and hundreds of thousands of yesterday's and tomorrow's Bolsheviks. In acting thus, the bourgeoisie is acting as all historically doomed classes have done. Communists should know that, in any case, the future belongs to them; therefore, we can (and must) combine the most intense passion in the great revolutionary struggle, with the coolest and most sober appraisal of the frenzied ravings of the bourgeoisie. The Russian revolution was cruelly defeated in 1905; the Russian Bolsheviks were defeated in July 1917; over 15,000 German Communists were killed as a result of the wily provocation and cunning maneuvers of Scheidemann and Noske, who were working

hand in glove with the bourgeoisie and the monarchist generals; White terror is raging in Finland and Hungary. But in all cases in all countries, communism is becoming steeled and is growing; its roots are so deep that persecution does not weaken or debilitate it but only strengthens it. Only one thing is lacking to enable us to march forward more confidently and firmly to victory, namely, the universal and thorough awareness of all Communists in all countries of the necessity to display the utmost *flexibility* in their tactics. The communist movement, which is developing magnificently, now lacks, especially in the advanced countries, this awareness and the ability to apply it in practice.

That which happened to such leaders of the Second International, such highly erudite Marxists devoted to socialism as Kautsky, Otto Bauer and others, could (and should) provide a useful lesson. They fully appreciated the need for flexible tactics; they themselves learned Marxist dialectic and taught it to others (and much of what they have done in this field will always remain a valuable contribution to socialist literature); however, *in the application* of this dialectic they committed such an error, or proved to be so *un* dialectical in practice, so incapable of taking into account the rapid change of forms and the rapid acquisition of new content by the old forms, that their fate is not much more enviable than that of Hyndman, Guesde and Plekhanov. The principal reason for their bankruptcy was that they were hypnotized by a definite form of growth of the working-class movement and socialism, forgot all about the one-sidedness of that form, were afraid to see the break-up which objective conditions made inevitable, and continued to repeat simple and, at first glance, incontestable axioms that had been learned by rote, like: “three is more than two”. But politics is more like algebra than like arithmetic , and still more like higher than elementary mathematics. In reality, all the old forms of the socialist movement have acquired a new content, and, consequently, a new symbol, the “minus” sign, has appeared in front of all the figures; our wiseacres, however, have stubbornly continued (and still continue) to persuade themselves and others that “minus three” is more than “minus two”.

We must see to it that Communists do not make a similar mistake, only in the opposite sense, or rather, we must see to it that a *similar mistake* , only

made in the opposite sense by the "Left" Communists, is corrected as soon as possible and eliminated as rapidly and painlessly as possible. It is not only Right doctrinairism that is erroneous; Left doctrinairism is erroneous too. Of course, the mistake of Left doctrinairism in communism is at present a thousand times less dangerous and less significant than that of Right doctrinairism (i.e., social-chauvinism and Kautskyism); but, after all, that is only due to the fact that Left communism is a very young trend, is only just coming into being. It is only for this reason that, under certain conditions, the disease can be easily eradicated, and we must set to work with the utmost energy to eradicate it.

The old forms burst asunder, for it turned out that their new content—anti-proletarian and reactionary—had attained an inordinate development. From the standpoint of the development of international communism, our work today has such a durable and powerful content (for Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat) that it can *and must* manifest itself in any form, both new and old; it can and must regenerate, conquer and subjugate all forms, not only the new, but also the old—not for the purpose of reconciling itself with the old, but for the purpose of making all and every form—new and old—a weapon for the complete and irrevocable victory of communism.

The Communists must exert every effort to direct the working-class movement and social development in general along the straightest and shortest road to the victory of Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world-wide scale. That is an incontestable truth. But it is enough to take one little step farther—a step that might seem to be in the same direction—and truth turns into error. We have only to say, as the German and British Left Communists do, that we recognize only one road, only the direct road, and that we will not permit tacking , conciliatory maneuvers, or compromising—and it will be a mistake which may cause, and in part has already caused and is causing, very grave prejudices to communism. Right doctrinairism persisted in recognizing only the old forms, and became utterly bankrupt, for it did not notice the new content. Left doctrinairism persists in the unconditional repudiation of certain old forms, failing to see that the new content is forcing its way through all and

sundry forms, that it is our duty as Communists to master all forms, to learn how, with the maximum rapidity, to supplement one form with another, to substitute one for another, and to adapt our tactics to any such change that does not come from our class or from our efforts.

World revolution has been so powerfully stimulated and accelerated by the horrors, vileness and abominations of the world imperialist war and by the hopelessness of the situation created by it, this revolution is developing in scope and depth with such splendid rapidity, with such a wonderful variety of changing forms, with such an instructive practical refutation of all doctrinairism, that there is every reason to hope for a rapid and complete recovery of the international communist movement from the infantile disorder of "Left-wing" communism.

April 27, 1920

Appendix

Before publishing houses in our country—which has been plundered by the imperialists of the whole world in revenge for the proletarian revolution, and which is still being plundered and blockaded by them regardless of all promises they made to their workers—were able to bring out my pamphlet, additional material arrived from abroad. Without claiming to present in my pamphlet anything more than the cursory notes of a publicist, I shall dwell briefly upon a few points.

I. The Split Among the German Communists

The split among the Communists in Germany is an accomplished fact. The "Lefts", or the "opposition on principle", have formed a separate Communist Workers' Party, as distinct from the Communist Party. A split also seems imminent in Italy—I say "seems", as I have only two additional issues (Nos. 7 and 8) of the Left newspaper, *Il Soviet* , in which the possibility of and necessity for a split is openly discussed, and mention is also made of a congress of the "Abstentionist" group (or the boycottists, i.e., opponents of participation in parliament), which group is still part of the Italian Socialist Party.

There is reason to fear that the split with the " Lefts" , the anti-parliamentarians (in part anti-politicals too, who are opposed to any political party and to work in the trade unions), will become an international phenomenon, like the split with the " Centrists" (i.e., Kautskyites, Longuetists, Independents, etc.). Let that be so. At all events, a split is better than confusion, which hampers the ideological, theoretical and revolutionary growth and maturing of the party, and its harmonious, really

organized practical work which actually paves the way for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Let the "Lefts" put themselves to a practical test on a national and international scale. Let them try to prepare for (and then implement) the dictatorship of the proletariat, without a rigorously centralized party with iron discipline, without the ability to become masters of every sphere, every branch, and every variety of political and cultural work. Practical experience will soon teach them.

Only, every effort should be made to prevent the split with the "Lefts" from impeding—or to see that it impedes as little as possible—the necessary amalgamation into a single party, inevitable in the near future, of all participants in the working-class movement who sincerely and conscientiously stand for Soviet government and the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was the exceptional good fortune of the Bolsheviks in Russia to have had fifteen years for a systematic and consummated struggle both against the Mensheviks (i.e., the opportunists and "Centrists") and against the "Lefts", long before the masses began direct action for the dictatorship of the proletariat. In Europe and America the same work has now to be done by forced marches, so to say. Certain individuals, especially among unsuccessful aspirants to leadership, may (if they lack proletarian discipline and are not honest towards themselves) persist in their mistakes for a long time; however, when the time is ripe, the masses of the workers will themselves unite easily and rapidly and unite all sincere Communists to form a single party capable of establishing the Soviet system and the dictatorship of the proletariat. [44]

II. The Communists and the Independents in Germany

In this pamphlet I have expressed the opinion that a compromise between the Communists and the Left wing of the Independents is necessary and useful to communism, but will not be easy to bring about. Newspapers

which I have subsequently received have confirmed this opinion on both points. No. 32 of *The Red Flag* , organ of the Central Committee, the Communist Party of Germany (*Die Rote Fahne* , Zentralorgan der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands, Spartakusbund, of March 26, 1920) published a "statement" by this Central Committee regarding the Kapp-Lüttwitz military *putsch* and on the "socialist government". This statement is quite correct both in its basic premise and its practical conclusions. The basic premise is that at present there is no "objective basis" for the dictatorship of the proletariat because the "majority of the urban workers" support the Independents. The conclusion is: a promise to be a "loyal opposition" (i.e., renunciation of preparations for a "forcible overthrow") to a "socialist government if it excludes bourgeois-capitalist parties".

In the main, this tactic is undoubtedly correct. Yet, even if minor inaccuracies of formulation should not be dwelt on, it is impossible to pass over in silence the fact that a government consisting of social-traitors should not (in an official statement by the Communist Party) be called "socialist"; that one should not speak of the exclusion of "bourgeois-capitalist parties", when the parties both of the Scheidemanns and of the Kautskys and Crispiens are petty-bourgeois-democratic parties; that things should never be written that are contained in §4 of the statement, which reads:

"…A state of affairs in which political freedom can be enjoyed without restriction, and bourgeois democracy cannot operate as the dictatorship of capital is, from the viewpoint of the development of the proletarian dictatorship, of the utmost importance in further winning the proletarian masses over to the side of communism."

Such a state of affairs is impossible. Petty-bourgeois leaders, the German Hendersons (Scheidemanns) and Snowdens (Crispiens), do not and cannot go beyond the bounds of bourgeois democracy, which, in its turn, cannot but be a dictatorship of capital. To achieve the practical results that the Central Committee of the Communist Party had been quite rightly working for, there was no need to write such things, which are wrong in principle and politically harmful. It would have been sufficient to say (if one wished

to observe parliamentary amenities): “As long as the majority of the urban workers follow the Independents, we Communists must do nothing to prevent those workers from getting rid of their last philistine-democratic (i.e., ‘bourgeois-capitalist’) illusions by going through the experience of having a government of their ‘own’.” That is sufficient ground for a compromise, which is really necessary and should consist in renouncing, for a certain period, all attempts at the forcible overthrow of a government which enjoys the confidence of a majority of the urban workers. But in everyday mass agitation, in which one is not bound by official parliamentary amenities, one might, of course, add: “Let scoundrels like the Scheidemanns , and philistines like the Kautskys and Crispiens reveal by their deeds how they have been fooled themselves and how they are fooling the workers; their ‘clean’ government will itself do the ‘cleanest’ job of all in ‘cleansing’ the Augean stables of socialism, Social-Democracy and other forms of social treachery.”

The real nature of the present leaders of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany (leaders of whom it has been wrongly said that they have already lost all influence, whereas in reality they are even more dangerous to the proletariat that the Hungarian Social-Democrats who styled themselves Communists and promised to “support” the dictatorship of the proletariat) was once again revealed during the German equivalent of the Kornilov revolt, i.e., the Kapp-Lüttwitz *putsch* . [45] A small but striking illustration is provided by two brief articles—one by Karl Kautsky entitled “Decisive Hours” (“Entscheidende Stunden”) in *Freiheit* (*Freedom*), organ of the Independents, of March 30, 1920, and the other by Arthur Crispien entitled “On the Political Situation” (in the same newspaper, issue of April 14, 1920). These gentlemen are absolutely incapable of thinking and reasoning like revolutionaries. They are sniveling philistine democrats, who become a thousand times more dangerous to the proletariat when they claim to be supporters of Soviet government and of the dictatorship of the proletariat because, in fact, whenever a difficult and dangerous situation arises they are sure to commit treachery… while “sincerely” believing that they are helping the proletariat! Did not the Hungarian Social-Democrats, after rechristening themselves Communists, also want to “help” the proletariat when, because of their cowardice and spinelessness, they

considered the position of Soviet power in Hungary hopeless and went sniveling to the agents of the Entente capitalists and the Entente hangmen?

III. Turati and Co. in Italy

The issues of the Italian newspaper *Il Soviet* referred to above fully confirm what I have said in the pamphlet about the Italian Socialist Party's error in tolerating such members and even such a group of parliamentarians in their ranks. It is still further confirmed by an outside observer like the Rome correspondent of *The Manchester Guardian* , organ of the British liberal bourgeoisie, whose interview with Turati is published in its issue of March 12, 1920. The correspondent writes:

"…Signor Turati's opinion is that the revolutionary peril is not such as to cause undue anxiety in Italy. The Maximalists are fanning the fire of Soviet theories only to keep the masses awake and excited. These theories are, however, merely legendary notions, unripe programmes, incapable of being put to practical use. They are likely only to maintain the working classes in a state of expectation. The very men who use them as a lure to dazzle proletarian eyes find themselves compelled to fight a daily battle for the extortion of some often trifling economic advantages so as to delay the moment when the working classes will lose their illusions and faith in their cherished myths. Hence a long string of strikes of all sizes and with all pretexts up to the very latest ones in the mail and railway services—strikes which make the already hard conditions of the country still worse. The country is irritated owing to the difficulties connected with its Adriatic problem, is weighed down by its foreign debt and by its inflated paper circulation, and yet it is still far from realizing the necessity of adopting that discipline of work which alone can restore order and prosperity."

It is clear as daylight that this British correspondent has blurted out the truth, which is probably being concealed and glossed over both by Turati himself, and his bourgeois defenders, accomplices and inspirers in Italy. That truth is that the ideas and political activities of Turati, Trèves,

Modigliani, Dugoni and Co. are really and precisely of the kind that the British correspondent has described. It is downright social treachery. Just look at this advocacy of order and discipline among the workers, who are wage-slaves toiling to enrich the capitalists! And how familiar to us Russians are all these Menshevik speeches! What a valuable admission it is that the masses are *in favor of the Soviet* government! How stupid and vulgarly bourgeois is the failure to understand the revolutionary role of strikes which are spreading spontaneously! Indeed, the correspondent of the British bourgeois-liberal newspaper has rendered Turati and Co. a disservice and has excellently confirmed the correctness of the demand by Comrade Bordiga and his friends on *Il Soviet* , who are insisting that the Italian Socialist Party, if it really wants to be *for* the Third International, should drum Turati and Co. out of its ranks and become a Communist Party both in name and in deed.

IV. False Conclusions from Correct Premises

However, Comrade Bordiga and his "Left" friends draw from their correct criticism of Turati and Co. the wrong conclusion that any participation in parliament is harmful in principle. The Italian "Lefts" cannot advance even a shadow of a serious argument in support of this view. They simply do not know (or try to forget) the international examples of really revolutionary and communist utilization of bourgeois parliaments, which has been of unquestionable value in preparing for the proletarian revolution. They simply cannot conceive of any "new" ways of that utilization, and keep on repeatedly and endlessly vociferating about the "old" non-Bolshevik way.

Herein lies their fundamental error. In *all* fields of activity, and not in the parliamentary sphere alone, communism must *introduce* (and without long and persistent effort it will be *unable* to introduce) something new in principle that will represent a radical break with the traditions of the Second International (while retaining and developing what was good in the latter).

Let us take, say, journalistic work. Newspapers, pamphlets and leaflets perform the indispensable work of propaganda, agitation and organization. No mass movement in any country at all civilized can get along without a journalistic apparatus. No outcries against "leaders" or solemn vows to keep the masses uncontaminated by the influence of leaders will relieve us of the necessity of using, for this work, people from a bourgeois-intellectual environment or will rid us of the bourgeois-democratic, "private property" atmosphere and environment in which this work is carried out under capitalism. Even two and a half years after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, after the conquest of political power by the proletariat, we still have this atmosphere around us, this environment of mass (peasant, artisan) bourgeois-democratic private property relations.

Parliamentarianism is one form of activity; journalism is another. The content of both can and should be communist if those engaged in these two spheres are genuine Communists, really members of a proletarian mass party. Yet, in neither sphere—and *in no other sphere of activity* under capitalism and during the period of transition from capitalism to socialism—is it possible to avoid those difficulties which the proletariat must overcome, those special problems which the proletariat must solve so as to use, for its own purposes, the services of people from the ranks of the bourgeoisie, eradicate bourgeois-intellectualist prejudices and influences, and weaken the resistance of (and, ultimately, completely transform) the petty-bourgeois environment.

Did we not, before the war of 1914–18, witness in all countries innumerable cases of extreme "Left" anarchists, syndicalists and others fulminating against parliamentarianism, deriding bourgeois-vulgarized parliamentary socialists, castigating their careerism, and so on and so forth, and yet themselves pursuing the *same kind* of bourgeois career *through* journalism and *through* work in the syndicates (trade unions)? Is not the example of Jouhaux and Merrheim, to limit oneself to France, typical in this respect?

The childishness of those who "repudiate" participation in parliament consists in their thinking it possible to " *solve* " the difficult problem of

combating bourgeois-democratic influences *within* the working-class movement in such a "simple", "easy", allegedly revolutionary manner, whereas they are actually merely running away from their own shadows, only closing their eyes to difficulties and trying to shrug them off with mere words. The most shameless careerism, the bourgeois utilization of parliamentary seats, glaringly reformist perversion of parliamentary activity, and vulgar petty-bourgeois conservatism are all unquestionably common and prevalent features engendered everywhere by capitalism, not only outside but also within the working-class movement. But the selfsame capitalism and the bourgeois environment it creates (which disappears very slowly even after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, since the peasantry constantly regenerates the bourgeoisie) give rise to what is essentially the same bourgeois careerism, national chauvinism, petty-bourgeois vulgarity, etc.—merely varying insignificantly in form—in positively every sphere of activity and life.

You think, my dear boycottists and anti-parliamentarians, that you are "terribly revolutionary", but in reality *you are frightened* by the comparatively minor difficulties of the struggle against bourgeois influences within the working-class movement, whereas your victory—i.e., the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the conquest of political power by the proletariat—will create *these very same* difficulties on a still larger, an infinitely larger scale. Like children, you are frightened by a minor difficulty which confronts you today, but you do not understand that tomorrow, and the day after, you will still have to learn, and learn thoroughly, to overcome the selfsame difficulties, only on an immeasurably greater scale.

Under Soviet rule, your proletarian party and ours will be invaded by a still larger number of bourgeois intellectuals. They will worm their way into the Soviets, the courts, and the administration, since communism cannot be built otherwise than with the aid of the human material created by capitalism, and the bourgeois intellectuals cannot be expelled and destroyed, but must be won over, remolded, assimilated and re-educated, just as we must—in a protracted struggle waged on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat—re-educate the proletarians themselves, who

do not abandon their petty-bourgeois prejudices at one stroke, by a miracle, at the behest of the Virgin Mary, at the behest of a slogan, resolution or decree, but only in the course of a long and difficult mass struggle against mass petty-bourgeois influences. Under Soviet rule, these same problems, which the anti-parliamentarians now so proudly, so haughtily, so lightly and so childishly brush aside with a wave of the hand— *these selfsame* problems are arising anew *within* the Soviets, within the Soviet administration among the Soviet "pleaders" (in Russia we have abolished, and have rightly abolished, the bourgeois legal bar, but it is reviving again under the cover of the "Soviet pleaders" [46] '). Among Soviet engineers, Soviet school-teachers and the privileged, i.e., the most highly skilled and best situated, *workers* at Soviet factories, we observe a constant revival of absolutely *all* the negative traits peculiar to bourgeois parliamentarianism, and we are conquering this evil—gradually—only by a tireless, prolonged and persistent struggle based on proletarian organization and discipline.

Of course, under the rule of the bourgeoisie it is very "difficult" to eradicate bourgeois habits from our own, i.e., the workers', party; it is "difficult" to expel from the party the familiar parliamentary leaders who have been hopelessly corrupted by bourgeois prejudices; it is "difficult" to subject to proletarian discipline the absolutely essential (even if very limited) number of people coming from the ranks of the bourgeoisie; it is "difficult" to form, in a bourgeois parliament, a communist group fully worthy of the working class; it is "difficult" to ensure that the communist parliamentarians do not engage in bourgeois parliamentary inanities, but concern themselves with the very urgent work of propaganda, agitation and organization among the masses. All this is "difficult", to be sure; it was difficult in Russia, and it is vastly more difficult in Western Europe and in America, where the bourgeoisie is far stronger, where bourgeois-democratic traditions are stronger, and so on.

Yet all these "difficulties" are mere child's play compared with the *same sort* of problems which, in any event, the proletariat will most certainly have to solve in order to achieve victory, both during the proletarian revolution and after the seizure of power by the proletariat. Compared with *these* truly gigantic problems of re-educating, under the proletarian

dictatorship, millions of peasants and small proprietors, hundreds of thousands of office employees, officials and bourgeois intellectuals, of subordinating them all to the proletarian state and to proletarian leadership, of eradicating their bourgeois habits and traditions—compared with these gigantic problems it is childishly easy to create, under the rule of the bourgeoisie, and in a bourgeois parliament, a really communist group of a real proletarian party.

If our "Left" and anti-parliamentarian comrades do not learn to overcome even such a small difficulty now, we may safely assert that either they will prove incapable of achieving the dictatorship of the proletariat, and will be unable to subordinate and remold the bourgeois intellectuals and bourgeois institutions on a wide scale, or they will have to *hastily complete their education* , and, by that haste, will do a great deal of harm to the cause of the proletariat, will commit more errors than usual, will manifest more than average weakness and inefficiency, and so on and so forth.

Until the bourgeoisie has been overthrown and, after that, until small-scale economy and small commodity production have entirely disappeared, the bourgeois atmosphere, proprietary habits and petty-bourgeois traditions will hamper proletarian work both outside and within the working-class movement, not only in a single field of activity—the parliamentary—but, inevitably, in every field of social activity, in all cultural and political spheres without exception. The attempt to brush aside, to fence oneself off from *one* of the "unpleasant" problems or difficulties in some one sphere of activity is a profound mistake, which will later most certainly have to be paid for. We must learn how to master every sphere of work and activity without exception, to overcome all difficulties and eradicate all bourgeois habits, customs and traditions everywhere. Any other way of presenting the question is just trifling, mere childishness.

May 12, 1920

V.

In the Russian edition of this book I somewhat incorrectly described the conduct of the Communist Party of Holland as a whole, in the sphere of international revolutionary policy. I therefore avail myself of the present opportunity to publish a letter from our Dutch comrades on this question and to correct the expression "Dutch Tribunists", which I used in the Russian text, and for which I now substitute the words "certain members of the Communist Party of Holland." [47]

N. Lenin

Letter From Wijnkoop

Moscow, June 30, 1920
Dear Comrade Lenin,

Thanks to your kindness, we members of the Dutch delegation to the Second Congress of the Communist International were able to read your *"Left-Wing" Communism—An Infantile Disorder* prior to its publication in the European languages. In several places in the book you emphasize your disapproval of the part played by some members of the Communist Party of Holland in international politics.

We feel, nevertheless, that we must protest against your laying the responsibility for their actions on the Communist Party. This is highly inaccurate. Moreover, it is unjust, because these members of the Communist Party of Holland take little or no part in the Party's current activities and are endeavoring, directly or indirectly, to give effect, in the Communist Party of Holland, to opposition slogans against which the Party and all its organs have waged, and continue to wage to this day, a most energetic struggle.

Fraternally yours,

D. J. Wijnkoop
(on behalf of the Dutch delegation)

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[1] The old *Iskra* —the first illegal Marxist newspaper in Russia. It was founded by V. I. Lenin in 1900, and played a decisive role in the formation of the revolutionary Marxist party of the working class in Russia. *Iskra* 's first issue appeared in Leipzig in December 1900, the following issues being brought out in Munich, and then beginning with July 1902—in London, and after the spring of 1903 —in Geneva.

On Lenin's initiative and with his participation, the editorial staff drew up a draft of the Party's Programme (published in *Iskra* No. 21), and prepared the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P., at which the Russian revolutionary Marxist party was actually founded.

Soon after the Second Congress, the Mensheviks, supported by Plekhanov, won control of *Iskra* . Beginning with issue No. 52, *Iskra* ceased to be an organ of the revolutionary Marxists.

[2] The reference is to the Mensheviks (who formed the Right and opportunist wing of Social-Democracy in the R.S.D.L.P.), and to the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

[3] The reference is to the Bolshevik deputies to the Fourth Duma, namely, A. Y. Badayev, M. K. Muranov, G. I. Petrovsky, F. N. Samoilov and N. R. Shagov. At the Duma's session of July 26 (August 8), 1914, at which the representatives of all the bourgeois-landowner Duma groups approved tsarist Russia's entry into the imperialist war, the Bolshevik Duma group declared a firm protest; they refused to vote for war credits and launched revolutionary propaganda among the people. In November 1914 the Bolshevik deputies were arrested, in February 1915 they were brought to trial, and exiled for life to Turukhansk Territory in Eastern Siberia. The courageous speeches made by the Bolshevik deputies at their trial, exposing the autocracy, played an important part in anti-war propaganda and in revolutionizing the toiling masses.

[4] *Longuetism* —the Centrist trend within the French Socialist Party, headed by Jean Longuet. During the First World War of 1914–18, the Longuetists conducted a policy of conciliation with the social-chauvinists. They rejected the revolutionary struggle and came out for "defense of country " in the imperialist war. Lenin called them petty-bourgeois nationalists. After the victory of the October Socialist Revolution in Russia, the Longuetists called themselves supporters of the proletarian dictatorship, but in fact they remained opposed to it. In December 1920 the Longuetists, together with the avowed reformists, broke away from the Party and joined the so-called Two-and-a-Half International.

[5] *Fabians* —members of the Fabian Society, a British reformist organization founded in 1884. The membership consisted, in the main, of bourgeois intellectuals. The Fabians denied the necessity

of the proletariat's class struggle and the socialist revolution, and contended that the transition from capitalism to socialism was possible only through petty reforms and the gradual reorganization of society. In 1900 the Fabian Society joined the Labour Party. The Fabians are characterized by Lenin in "British Pacifism and British Dislike of Theory" (see present edition, Vol. 21, pp. 260–65) and elsewhere.

[6] The *Independent Labour Party of Britain* (I.L.P.)—a reformist organization founded in 1893 by leaders of the "new trade unions", in conditions of a revival of the strike struggle and the mounting movement for British working-class independence of the bourgeois parties. The I.L.P. included members of the "new trade unions" and those of a number of the old trade unions, as well as intellectuals and petty bourgeoisie who were under the influence of the Fabians. The I.L.P. was headed by James Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald. From its very inception, the I.L.P. took a bourgeois-reformist stand, laying particular stress on parliamentary forms of struggle and parliamentary deals with the Liberals. Lenin wrote of the I.L.P. that "in reality it is an opportunist party always dependent on the bourgeoisie".

[7] *Ministerialism* (or "ministerial socialism", or else Millerandism)—the opportunist tactic of socialists' participation in reactionary bourgeois governments. The term appeared when in 1899, the French socialist Millerand joined the bourgeois government of Waldeck-Rousseau.

[8] The *Independent Social - Democratic Party of Germany* —a Centrist party founded in April 1917.

A split took place at the Congress of the Independent Social-Democratic Party, held in Halle in October 1920, the majority joining the Communist Party of Germany in December 1920. The Right wing formed a separate party, retaining the old name of the Independent Social-Democratic Party. In 1922 the "Independents" re-joined the German Social-Democratic Party.

[9] Lenin is referring probably to his article "What Should Not Be Copied from the German Labour Movement", published in the Bolshevik magazine *Prosveshcheniye* in April 1914 (see present edition, Vol. 20, pp. 254–58). Here Lenin exposed the treacherous behavior of Karl Legien, the German Social-Democrat who in 1912, in addressing the Congress of the U.S.A., praised U.S. official circles and bourgeois parties.

[10] *Spartacists* —members of the Spartacus League founded in January 1916, during the First World War, under the leadership of Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring and Clara Zetkin. The Spartacists conducted revolutionary anti-war propaganda among the masses, and exposed the expansionist policy of German imperialism and the treachery of the Social-Democratic leaders. However, the Spartacists—the German Left wing—did not get rid of their semi-Menshevik errors on the most important questions of theory and tactics. A criticism of the German Left-wing's mistakes is given in Lenin's works "On Junius's Pamphlet" (see present edition, Vol. 22, pp. 297–305), "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism" (see Vol. 23, pp. 28–76) and elsewhere.

In April 1917, the Spartacists joined the Centrist Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, preserving their organizational independence. After the November 1918 revolution in Germany, the Spartacists broke away from the “Independents”, and in December of the same year founded the Communist Party of Germany.

[11] The reference is to Frederick Engels’s letter to August Bebel, written on March 18–28, 1875.

[12] The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed between Soviet Russia and the powers of the Quadruple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey) on March 3, 1918, at Brest-Litovsk and ratified on March 15 by the Fourth (Extraordinary) All-Russia Congress of Soviets. The peace terms were very harsh for Soviet Russia. According to the treaty, Poland, almost all the Baltic states, and part of Byelorussia were placed under the control of Germany and Austria-Hungary. The Ukraine was separated from Soviet Russia, becoming a state dependent on Germany. Turkey gained control of the cities of Kars, Batum and Ardagan. In August 1918, Germany imposed on Soviet Russia a supplementary treaty and a financial agreement containing new and exorbitant demands.

The treaty prevented further needless loss of life, and gave the R.S.F.S.R. the ability to shift its attention to urgent domestic matters. The signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk promoted the struggle for peace among the broad masses of all the warring nations, and denounced the war as a struggle between imperialist powers. On November 13, 1918, following the November revolution in Germany, which overthrew the monarchist regime, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee annulled the predatory Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

[13] The reference is to the otzovists [*the term* otzovist *derives from the Russian verb “* otozvat *” meaning “to recall”. — Ed.*] and ultimatumists , the struggle against whom developed in 1908, and in 1909 resulted in the expulsion of A. Bogdanov, the otzovist leader, from the Bolshevik Party. Behind a screen of revolutionary phrases, the otzovists demanded the recall of the Social-Democrat deputies from the Third Duma and the cessation of activities in legal organizations such as the trade unions, the cooperatives, etc. Ultimatumism was a variety of otzovism. The ultimatumists did not realize the necessity of conducting persistent day-by-day work with the Social-Democrat deputies, so as to make them consistent revolutionary parliamentarians. They proposed that an ultimatum should be presented to the Social-Democratic group in the Duma, demanding their absolute subordination to decisions of the Party’s Central Committee; should the deputies fail to comply, they were to be recalled from the Duma. A conference of the enlarged editorial board of the Bolshevik paper *Proletary* , held in June 1909, pointed out in its decision that “Bolshevism, as a definite trend in the R.S.D.L.P., had nothing in common either with otzovism or with ultimatumism ”. The conference urged the Bolsheviks “to wage a most resolute struggle against these deviations from the path of revolutionary Marxism” (*KPSS v rezolutsiyakh i resheniyakh syezdov , konferentsii i plenumov TsK* [*The C.P.S.U. in the Resolutions and Decisions of Its Congresses , Conferences and Plenums of the Central Committee*], Part I, 1954, p. 221).

[14] On August 6 (19), 1905, the tsar's manifesto was made public, proclaiming the law on the setting up of the Duma and the election procedures. This body was known as the Bulygin Duma, after A.G. Bulygin, the Minister of the Interior, whom the tsar entrusted with drawing up the Duma draft. According to the latter, the Duma had no legislative functions, but could merely discuss certain questions as a consultative body under the tsar. The Bolsheviks called upon the workers and peasants to actively boycott the Bulygin Duma, and concentrate all agitation on the slogans of an armed uprising, a revolutionary army, and a provisional revolutionary government. The boycott campaign against the Bulygin Duma was used by the Bolsheviks to mobilize all the revolutionary forces, organize mass political strikes, and prepare for an armed uprising. Elections to the Bulygin Duma were not held and the government was unable to convene it. The Duma was swept away by the mounting tide of the revolution and the all-Russia October political strike of 1905.

[15] Lenin is referring to the *all - Russia October political strike of 1905* , during the first Russian revolution. This strike, which involved over two million people, was conducted under the slogan of the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy, an active boycott of the Bulygin Duma, the summoning of a Constituent Assembly and the establishment of a democratic republic. The all-Russia political strike showed the strength of the working-class movement, fostered the development of the revolutionary struggle in the countryside, the army and the navy. The October strike led the proletariat to the December armed uprising. Concerning the October strike, see the article by V. I. Lenin "The All-Russia Political Strike" (present edition, Vol. 9, pp. 392–95).

[16] What applies to individuals also applies—with necessary modifications—to politics and parties. It is not he who makes no mistakes that is intelligent. There are no such men, nor can there be. It is he whose errors are not very grave and who is able to rectify them easily and quickly that is intelligent.

[17] The " *opposition on principle* "—a group of German Left-wing Communists advocating anarcho-syndicalist views. When the Second Congress of the Communist Party of Germany, which was held in Heidelberg in October 1919, expelled the opposition, the latter formed the so-called Communist Workers' Party of Germany, in April 1920. To facilitate the unification of all German communist forces and win over the finest proletarian. elements in the C.W.P.G ., the opposition was temporarily admitted into the Communist International in November 1920 with the rights of a sympathizing member.

However, the Executive Committee of the Communist International still considered the United Communist Party of Germany to be the only authoritative section of the Comintern. C.W.P.G.'s representatives were admitted into the Comintern on the condition that they merged with the United Communist Party of Germany and supported all its activities. The C.W.P.G. leaders, however, failed to observe these conditions. The Third Congress of the Communist International, which was held in June–July 1921, and wanted solidarity with workers who still followed the C.W.P.G. leaders,

resolved to give the C.W.P.G. two months to call a congress and settle the question of affiliation. The C.W.P.G. Leaders did not obey the Third Congress's resolution and thus placed themselves outside the Communist International. Later the C.W.P.G. degenerated into a small sectarian group without any support in the working class.

[18] *Horner , Karl* —Anton Pannekoek.

[19] *Kommunistische Arbeiterzeitung* (The Communist Workers' Newspaper)—organ of the anarcho-syndicalist group of the German Leftwing Communists (see Note 17). The newspaper was published in Hamburg from 1919 till 1927. Karl Erler, who is mentioned by V. I. Lenin, was Heinrich Laufenberg's pen-name. Karl Erler, "The Dissolution of the Party" ,

Kommunistische Arbeiterzeitung, Hamburg, February 7, 1920, No. 32:

"The working class cannot destroy the bourgeois state without destroying bourgeois democracy, and it cannot destroy bourgeois democracy without destroying parties."

The more muddle-headed of the syndicalists and anarchists in the Latin countries may derive "satisfaction" from the fact that solid Germans, who evidently consider themselves Marxists (by their articles in the above-mentioned paper K. Erler and K. Horner have shown most plainly that they consider themselves sound Marxists, but talk incredible nonsense in a most ridiculous manner and reveal their failure to understand the ABC of Marxism), go to the length of making utterly inept statements. Mere acceptance of Marxism does not save one from errors. We Russians know this especially well, because Marxism has been very often the "fashion" in our country.

[20] The reference is to the *League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class* organized by V. I. Lenin in the autumn of 1895. The League of Struggle united about twenty Marxist circles in St. Petersburg. It was headed by the Central Group including V. I. Lenin, A. A. Vaneyev, P. K. Zaporozhets, G. M. Krzhizhanovsky, N. K. Krupskaya, L. Martov, M. A. Silvin, V. V. Starkov, and others; five members headed by V. I. Lenin directed the League's activities. The organization was divided into district groups. Progressive workers such as I. V. Babushkin, V. A. Shelgunov and others linked these groups with the factories.

The St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class was, in V. I. Lenin's words, the embryo of a revolutionary party based on the working-class movement and giving leadership to the class struggle of the proletariat.

[21] The Congress was held in Moscow from March 29 to April 5, 1920. The Ninth Congress was more numerous than any previous Party congresses. It was attended by 715 delegates—553 of them with full votes, and 162 with deliberative votes—representing a membership of 611,978. Represented were the Party organizations of Central Russia, the Ukraine, the Urals, Siberia and other regions

recently liberated by the Red Army. Many of the delegates came to the Congress straight from the front.

The agenda of the Congress was as follows:

1. The report of the Central Committee.
2. The immediate tasks of economic construction.
3. The trade union movement.
4. Organizational questions.
5. The tasks of the Communist International.
6. The attitude towards the cooperatives.
7. The change-over to the militia system.
8. Elections to the Central Committee.
9. Miscellaneous.

The Congress was held under the guidance of V. I. Lenin, who was the main speaker on the political work of the Central Committee and replied to the debate on the report. He also spoke on economic construction and cooperation, made the speech at the closing of the Congress, and submitted a proposal on the list of candidates to the Party's Central Committee.

In the resolution "The Immediate Tasks of Economic Development " the Congress noted that "the basic condition of economic rehabilitation of the country is a steady implementation of the single economic plan for the coming historical epoch" (*KPSS v rezolutsiyakh i resheniyakh syezdov , konferentsii i plenumov TsK* [*The C.P.S.U. in the Resolutions and Decisions of Its Congresses , Conferences and Plenums of the Central Committee*], Part I, 1954, p. 478). The kingpin of the single economic plan was electrification, which V. I. Lenin considered a great programme for a period of 10 to 20 years. The directives of the Ninth Congress were the basis of the plan conclusively drawn up by the State Commission for the Electrification of Russia (the GOELRO plan) and approved by the All-Russia Congress of Soviets in December 1920.

The Congress paid particular attention to the organization of industrial management. The resolution on this question called for the establishment of competent, firm and energetic one-man management. Taking its guidance from Lenin, the Congress especially stressed the necessity to extensively enlist old and experienced experts.

The anti-Party group of Democratic Centralists, consisting of Sapronov, Osinsky, V. Smirnov and others, came out against the Party line. Behind a cover of phrases about Democratic Centralism but in fact distorting that principle, they denied the need for one-man management at factories, came out

against strict Party and state discipline, and alleged that the Central Committee did not give effect to the principle of collective leadership.

The group of Democratic Centralists was supported at the Congress by Rykov, Tomsky, Milyutin and Lomov. The Congress rebuffed the Democratic Centralists and rejected their proposals.

The Congress gave special attention to labor emulation and communist *Subbotniks* . To stimulate such emulation, the extensive application of the bonus system of wages was recommended. The Congress resolved that May 1, the international proletarian holiday, which in 1920 fell on Saturday, should be a mass *Subbotnik* organized throughout Russia.

An important place in the work of the Congress was held by the question of trade unions, which was considered from the viewpoint of adapting the entire work of the trade unions to the accomplishment of the economic tasks. In a resolution on this question, the Congress distinctly defined the trade unions' role, their relations with the state and the Party, forms and methods of guidance of trade unions by the Communist Party, as well as forms of their participation in communist construction. The Congress decisively rebuffed the anarcho-syndicalist elements (Shlyapnikov, Lozovsky, Tomsky and Lutovinov), who advocated the "independence" of the trade unions and contrasted them to the Communist Party and the Soviet government.

At a closed meeting held on April 4, the Congress elected a new Central Committee of 19 members and 12 candidate members. The former included V.I. Lenin, A. A. Andreyev, F. E. Dzerzhinsky, M. I. Kalinin, Y. E. Rudzutak, F. A. Sergeyev (Artyom), and J. V. Stalin. On April 5 the Congress concluded its work.

[22] Malinovsky was a prisoner of war in Germany. On his return to Russia when the Bolsheviks were in power he was instantly put on trial and shot by our workers. The Mensheviks attacked us most bitterly for our mistake—the fact that an *agent provocateur* had become a member of the Central Committee of our Party. But when, under Kerensky, we demanded the arrest and trial of Rodzyanko, the Chairman of the Duma, because he had known, even before the war, that Malinovsky was an *agent provocateur* and *had not informed* the Trudoviks and the workers in the Duma, neither the Mensheviks nor the Socialist-Revolutionaries in the Kerensky government supported our demand, and Rodzyanko remained at large and made off unhindered to join Denikin.

[23] Between the February 1917 Revolution and 1919 inclusively, the Party's membership changed as follows: by the Seventh All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) (April 1917) the Party numbered 80,000 members, by the Sixth R.S.D.L.P.(B.) Congress in July–August 1917—about 240,000, by the Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) in March 1918—not less than 270,000; by the Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) in March 1919—313,766 members.

[24] The reference is to *Party Week* , which was held in accordance with the resolution of the Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) on building up the Party's membership. The Party Week was conducted in conditions of the bitter struggle waged by the Soviet state against the foreign intervention and domestic counterrevolution. Party Week was first held in the Petrograd organization of the R.C.P.(B.), August 10–17, 1919 (the second Party Week was held in Petrograd in October–November 1919); between September 20 and 28 a Party Week was held in the Moscow Gubernia organization. Summarizing the experience of the first Party Weeks, the Plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.), held on September 26, 1919, resolved that Party Weeks should be held in cities, the countryside and the army. At the end of September, the Central Committee addressed a circular to all Party organizations pointing out that, as the re-registration and purge of the membership had been accomplished in almost all Party organizations, new members might be enrolled. The Central Committee stressed that during Party Weeks only industrial workers, peasants, and Red Army and Navy men should be admitted into the Party. As a result of Party Weeks, over 200,000 joined the Party in 38 gubernias of the European part of the R.S.F.S.R., more than a half of them being industrial workers. Over 25 percent of the armed forces' strength joined the Party at the fronts.

[25] *LCW* , Vol. 30, pp. 253–75.

[26] The *Communist International* —a journal, organ of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. It was published in Russian, German, French, English, Spanish and Chinese, the first issue appearing on May 1, 1919.

The journal published theoretical articles and documents of the Comintern, including a number of articles by Lenin. It elucidated the fundamental questions of Marxist-Leninist theory in connection with problems confronting the international working-class and communist movement and the experience of socialist construction in the Soviet Union. It also waged a struggle against various anti-Leninist tendencies.

Publication of the journal ceased in June 1943 in connection with the resolution adopted by the Presidium of the Comintern's Executive Committee on May 15, 1943, on the dissolution of the Communist International.

[27] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence* , Moscow, 1965, p. 110.

[28] The *Industrial Workers of the World* (*I.W.W.*)—a workers' trade union organization, founded in the U.S.A. in 1905, and in the main organizing unskilled and low-paid workers of various trades. Among its founders were such working-class leaders as Daniel De Leon, Eugene Debs and William Haywood. I.W.W. organizations were also set up in Canada, Australia, Britain, Latin America and South Africa. In conditions of the mass strike movement in the U.S.A., which developed under the influence of the Russian revolution of 1905–07, the I.W.W. organized a number

of successful mass strikes, waged a struggle against the policy of class collaboration conducted by reformist leaders of the American Federation of Labor and Right-wing socialists. During the First World War of 1914–18, the organization led a number of mass anti-war actions by the American working class. Some I.W.W. Leaders, among them William Haywood, welcomed the Great October Socialist Revolution and joined the Communist Party of the U.S.A. At the same time, anarcho-syndicalist features showed up in I.W.W. activities: it did not recognize the proletariat's political struggle, denied the Party's leading role and the necessity of the proletarian dictatorship, and refused to carry on work among the membership of the American Federation of Labor. In 1920 the organization's anarcho-syndicalist leaders took advantage of the imprisonment of many revolutionaries and against the will of the trade union masses, rejected appeal by the Comintern's Executive Committee that they join the Communist International. As a result of the leaders' opportunist policy, the I.W.W. degenerated into a sectarian organization, which soon lost all influence on the working-class movement.

[29] The Gomperses, Hendersons, Jouhaux and Legiens are nothing but Zubatovs, differing from our Zubatov only in their European garb and polish, and the civilized, refined and democratically suave manner of conducting their despicable policy.

[30] I have had too little opportunity to acquaint myself with "Left-wing" communism in Italy. Comrade Bordiga and his faction of Abstentionist Communists (*Comunista astensionista*) are certainly wrong in advocating non-participation in parliament. But on one point, it seems to me, Comrade Bordiga is right—as far as can be judged from two issues of his paper, *Il Soviet* (Nos. 3 and 4, January 18 and February 1, 1920), from four issues of Comrade Serrati's excellent periodical, *Comunismo* (Nos. 1–4, October l–November 30, 1919), and from separate issues of Italian bourgeois papers which I have seen. Comrade Bordiga and his group are right in attacking Turati and his partisans, who remain in a party which has recognized Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and yet continue their former pernicious and opportunist policy as members of parliament. Of course, in tolerating this, Comrade Serrati and the entire Italian Socialist Party* are making a mistake which threatens to do as much harm and give rise to the same dangers as it did in Hungary, where the Hungarian Turatis sabotaged both the party and the Soviet government** from within. Such a mistaken, inconsistent, or spineless attitude towards the opportunist parliamentarians gives rise to "Left-wing" communism, on the one hand, and *to a certain extent* justifies its existence, on the other. Comrade Serrati is obviously wrong when he accuses Deputy Turati of being "inconsistent" (*Comunismo* No. 3), for it is the Italian Socialist Party itself that is inconsistent in tolerating such opportunist parliamentarians as Turati and Co.

*From its foundation in 1892, the *Italian Socialist Party* saw a bitter ideological struggle between the opportunist and the revolutionary trends within it. At the Reggio Emilia Congress of 1912, the most outspoken reformists who supported the war and collaboration with the government and the

bourgeoisie (Ivanoe Bonomi, Leonida Bissolati and others) were expelled from the party under pressure from the Left wing. After the outbreak of the First World War and prior to Italy's entry into it, the I.S.P. came out against the war and advanced the slogan: "Against war, for neutrality!" In December 1914, a group of renegades including Benito Mussolini, who advocated the bourgeoisie's imperialist policy and supported the war, were expelled from the party. When Italy entered the war on the Entente's side (May 1915), three distinct trends emerged in the Italian Socialist Party: 1) the Right wing, which aided the bourgeoisie in the conduct of the war; 2) the Centre , which united most of party members and came out under the slogan: "No part in the war, and no sabotage of the war" and 3) the Left wing, which took a firmer anti-war stand, but could not organize a consistent struggle against the war. The Left wing did not realize the necessity of converting the imperialist war into a civil war, and of a decisive break with the reformists.

After the October Socialist Revolution in Russia, the Left wing of the I.S.P. grew stronger, and the 16th Party Congress held on October 5–8, 1919, in Bologna, adopted a resolution on affiliation to the Third International. I.S.P. representatives took part in the work of the Second Congress of the Comintern. After the Congress Centrist Serrati, head of the delegation, declared against a break with the reformists. At the 17th Party Congress in Leghorn in January 1921, the Centrists, who were in the majority, refused to break with the reformists and to accept all the terms of admission into the Comintern. On January 21, 1921, the Left-wing delegates walked out of the Congress and founded the Communist Party of Italy.

**Soviet rule was established in Hungary on March 21, 1919. The socialist revolution in Hungary was a peaceful one, the Hungarian bourgeoisie being unable to resist the people. Incapable of overcoming its internal and external difficulties, it decided to hand over power for a while to the Right-wing Social-Democrats so as to prevent the development of the revolution. However, the Hungarian Communist Party's prestige had grown so great, and the demands of rank-and-file Social-Democrats for unity with the Communists had become so insistent that the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party proposed to the arrested Communist leaders the formation of a joint government. The Social-Democratic leaders were obliged to accept the terms advanced by the Communists during the negotiations, i.e., the formation of a Soviet government, disarmament of the bourgeoisie, the creation of a Red Army and people's militia, confiscation of the landed estates, the nationalization of industry, an alliance with Soviet Russia, etc.

An agreement was simultaneously signed on the merging of the two parties to form the Hungarian Socialist Party. While the two parties were being merged, errors were made which later became clear. The merger was carried out mechanically, without isolation of the reformist elements.

At its first meeting, the Revolutionary Governmental Council adopted a resolution on the formation of the Red Army. On March 26, the Soviet Government of Hungary issued decrees on the nationalization of industrial enterprises, transport, and the banks; on April 2, a decree was published on the monopoly of foreign trade. Workers' wages were increased by an average of 25 percent, and an 8-hour working day was introduced. On April 3, land-reform law was issued, by which all estates exceeding 57 hectares in area were confiscated. The confiscated land, however, was not distributed among the land-starved and landless peasants, but was turned over to agricultural producers' cooperatives and state farms organized after the reform. The poor peasants, who had hoped to get land, were disappointed. This prevented the establishment of a firm alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry, and weakened Soviet power in Hungary.

The Entente imperialists instituted an economic blockade of the Soviet Republic. Armed intervention against the Hungarian Soviet Republic was organized, the advance of interventionist troops stirring up the Hungarian counter-revolutionaries. The treachery of the Right-wing Social-Democrats, who entered into an alliance with international imperialism, was one of the causes of the Hungarian Soviet Republic's downfall.

The unfavorable international situation in the summer of 1919, when Soviet Russia was encircled by enemies and therefore could not help the Hungarian Soviet Republic, also played a definite role. On August 1, 1919, as a result of joint actions by the foreign imperialist interventionists and the domestic counterrevolutionaries, Soviet power in Hungary was overthrown.

[31] Marx/Engels, *Werke* , Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1962, Bd. 18, S. 533.

[32] Within every class, even in the conditions prevailing in the most enlightened countries, even within the most advanced class, and even when the circumstances of the moment have aroused all its spiritual forces to an exceptional degree, there always are—and inevitably *will be* as long as classes exist, as long as a classless society has not fully consolidated itself, and has not developed on its own foundations— representatives of the class who do not think, and are incapable of thinking, for themselves. Capitalism would not be the Oppressor of the masses that it actually is, if things were otherwise.

[33] The *League of Nations* was an international body which existed between the First and the Second World Wars. It was founded in 1919 at the Paris Peace Conference of the victor powers of the First World War. The Covenant of the League of Nations formed part of the Treaty of Versailles of 1919, and was signed by 44 nations. The Covenant was designed to produce the impression that this organization's aim was to combat aggression, reduce armaments, and consolidate peace and security.

In practice, however, its leaders shielded the aggressors, fostered the arms race and preparations for the Second World War.

Between 1920 and 1934, the League's activities were hostile towards the Soviet Union. It was one of the centers for the organizing of armed intervention against the Soviet state in 1920–21.
On September 15, 1934, on French initiative, 34 member states invited the Soviet Union to join the League of Nations, which the U.S.S.R. did, with the aim of strengthening peace. However, the Soviet Union's attempts to form a peace front met with resistance from reactionary circles in the Western powers. With the outbreak of the Second World War the League's activities came to an end, the formal dissolution taking place in April 1946, according to a decision by the specially summoned Assembly.

[34] Lenin is referring to a passage from Frederick Engels's letter to F. A. Sorge of November 29, 1886, in which, criticizing German Social-Democrat political exiles living in America, Engels wrote that for them the theory was "a credo, not a guide to action" (see Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence* , Moscow, 1965, p. 395).

[35] The reference is to the international socialist conferences in Zimmerwald and Kienthal (Switzerland).

The *Zimmerwald Conference* , the first international socialist conference, was held on September 5–8, 1915. The *Kienthal Conference* , the second international socialist conference, was held in the small town of Kienthal on April 24–30, 1916.

The Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences contributed to the ideological unity, on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, of the Left-wing elements in West-European Social-Democracy, who later played an active part in the formation of Communist parties in their countries and the establishment of the Third, Communist International.

[36] " *Revolutionary Communists* " —a Narodnik group which broke away from the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries after the latter's mutiny in July 1918. In September 1918, they formed the "Party of Revolutionary Communism", which favored cooperation with the R.C.P.(B.), and pledged support for Soviet power. Their programme which remained on the platform of Narodnik utopianism was muddled and eclectic. While recognizing that Soviet rule created preconditions for the establishment of a socialist system, the "revolutionary communists" denied the necessity of the proletarian dictatorship during the transitional period from capitalism to socialism. Throughout the lifetime of the "Party of Revolutionary Communism" , certain of its groups broke away from it, some of them joining the R.C.P.(B.) (A. Kolegayev, A. Bitsenko, M. Dobrokhotov and others), and others, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries. Two representatives of the "Party of Revolutionary Communism" were allowed to attend the Second Congress of the Comintern, in a deliberative capacity, but with no

votes. In September 1920, following the Congress decision that there must be a single Communist Party in each country, the "Party of Revolutionary Communism " decided to join the R.C.P.(B.). In October of the same year, the R.C.P.(B.) Central Committee permitted Party organizations to enroll members of the former "Party of Revolutionary Communism" in the R.C.P.(B.).

[37] The *British Socialist Party* was founded in 1911, in Manchester, as a result of a merger of the Social-Democratic Party and other socialist groups. The B.S.P. conducted agitation in the spirit of Marxism, it was "not opportunist and was *really* independent of the Liberals". However, its small membership and its poor links with the masses gave the B.S.P. a somewhat sectarian character. During the First World War, a bitter struggle developed within the British Socialist Party between the internationalists (William Gallacher, Albert Inkpin, John Maclean, Theodore Rothstein and others), and the social-chauvinists, headed by Hyndman. Within the internationalist trend were inconsistent elements that took a Centrist stand on a number of issues. In February 1916, a group of B.S.P. leaders founded the newspaper *The Call* , which played an important role in uniting the internationalists. The B.S.P.'s annual conference, held in Salford in April 1916, condemned the social-chauvinist stand of Hyndman and his supporters, who, after the conference, left the party.

The British Socialist Party welcomed the Great October Socialist Revolution, its members playing an important part in the "Hands Off Russia" movement. In 1919, the overwhelming majority of its organizations (98 against 4) declared for affiliation to the Communist International. The British Socialist Party, together with the Communist Unity Group formed the core of the Communist Party of Great Britain. At the First (Unity) Congress, held in 1920. the vast majority of B.S.P. local organizations entered the Communist Party.

[38] The *Socialist Labour Party* was organized in 1903 by a group of the Left-wing Social-Democrats who had broken away from the Social-Democratic Federation. The *South Wales Socialist Society* was a small group consisting mostly of Welsh coal miners. The *Workers' Socialist Federation* was a small organization which emerged from the Women's Suffrage League and consisted mostly of women.

The Leftist organizations did not join the Communist Party of Great Britain when it was formed (its Inaugural Congress was held on July 31–August 1, 1920) since the Party's programme contained a clause on the Party participation in parliamentary elections and on affiliation to the Labour Party. At the Communist Party's Congress in January 1921, the South Wales Socialist Society and the Workers' Socialist Federation, which had assumed the names of the Communist Workers' Party and the Communist Party respectively, united with the Communist Party of Great Britain under the name of the United Communist Party of Great Britain. The leaders of the Socialist Labour Party refused to join.

[39] I believe this party is opposed to affiliation to the Labour Party but not all its members are opposed to participation in Parliament.

[40] The results of the November 1917 elections to the Constituent Assembly in Russia, based on returns embracing over 36,000,000 voters, were as follows: the Bolsheviks obtained 25 percent of the votes; the various parties of the landowners and the bourgeoisie obtained 13 percent, and the petty-bourgeois-democratic parties, i.e ., the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and a number of similar small groups obtained 62 percent.

[41] This refers to the counter-revolutionary mutiny organized in August 1917 by the bourgeoisie and the landowners, under the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, the tsarist general Kornilov. The conspirators hoped to seize Petrograd, smash the Bolshevik Party, break up the Soviets, establish a military dictatorship in the country, and prepare the restoration of the monarchy.

The mutiny began on August 25 (September 7), Kornilov sending the 3rd Cavalry Corps against Petrograd, where Kornilov counter-revolutionary organizations were ready to act.

The Kornilov mutiny was crushed by the workers and peasants led by the Bolshevik Party. Under pressure from the masses, the Provisional Government was forced to order that Kornilov and his accomplices be arrested and brought to trial.

[42] The reference is to the military-monarchist coup d'état, the so-called Kapp *putsch* organized by the German reactionary militarists. It was headed by the monarchist landowner Kapp and Generals Ludendorff, Seeckt and Lüttwitz. The conspirators prepared the coup with the connivance of the Social-Democratic government. On March 13, 1920, the mutinous generals moved troops against Berlin and, meeting with no resistance from the government, proclaimed a military dictatorship. The German workers replied with a general strike. Under pressure from the proletariat the Kapp government was overthrown on March 17, and the Social-Democrats again took power.

[43] The *Dreyfus case* —a provocative trial organized in 1894 by the reactionary-monarchist circles of the French militarists. On trial was Dreyfus, a Jewish officer of the French General Staff, falsely accused of espionage and high treason. Dreyfus's conviction—he was condemned to life imprisonment—was used by the French reactionaries to rouse anti-Semitism and to attack the republican regime and democratic liberties. When, in 1898, socialists and progressive bourgeois democrats such as Emile Zola, Jean Jaurès, and Anatole France launched a campaign for Dreyfus's re-trial, the case became a major political issue and split the country into two camps—the republicans and democrats on the one hand, and a bloc of monarchists, clericals, anti-Semites and nationalists, on the other. Under the pressure of public opinion, Dreyfus was released in 1899, and in 1906 was acquitted by the Court of Cassation and reinstated in the Army.

[44] With regard to the question of future amalgamation of the "Left" Communists, the anti-parliamentarians, with the Communists in general, I would make the following additional remarks. In the measure in which I have been able to familiarize myself with the newspapers of the "Left" Communists and the Communists in general in Germany, I find that the former have the advantage of being better able than the latter to carry on agitation among the masses. I have repeatedly observed

something similar to this in the history of the Bolshevik Party, though on a smaller scale, in individual local organizations, and not on a national scale. For instance, in 1907–08 the "Left" Bolsheviks, on certain occasions and in certain places, carried on more successful agitation among the masses than we did. This may partly have been due to the fact that a revolutionary moment, or at a time when revolutionary recollections are still fresh, it is easier to approach the masses with tactics of sheer negation. This, however, is not an argument to prove the correctness of such tactics. At all events, there is not the least doubt that a Communist *party* that wishes to be the real vanguard, the advanced detachment, of the revolutionary *class*, of the proletariat—and which, in addition wishes to learn to lead the *masses*, not only the proletarian, but also the *non*-proletarian masses of working and exploited people—must know how to conduct propaganda, how to organize, and how to carry on agitation in a manner most simple and comprehensible, most clear and vivid, both to the urban, factory masses and to the rural masses.

[45] Incidentally, this has been dealt with in an exceptionally clear, concise, precise and Marxist way in the excellent organ of the Austrian Communist Party, *The Red Banner*, of March 28 and 30, 1920. (*Die Rote Fahne*, Wien, 1920, Nos. 266 and 267; L.L.: "*Ein neuer Abschnitt der deutschen Revolution*" ["A New Stage of the German Revolution"— *Ed.*]).

[46] "*Soviet pleaders*"—collegiums of advocates established in February 1918, under the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants' and Cossacks' Deputies. In October 1920, these collegiums were abolished.

[47] On the basis of this directive from Lenin the words "certain members of the Communist Party of Holland" have been substituted everywhere in this volume, in the text of *"Left-Wing" Communism — an Infantile Disorder* for the expression "Dutch Tribunists".

Where Do Correct Ideas Come From?

by Mao Zedong, 1963

Where do correct ideas come from?

Do they drop from the skies? No.

Are they innate in the mind? No.

They come from social practice, and from it alone; they come from three kinds of social practice, the struggle for production, the class struggle, and scientific experiment. It is man's social being that determines his thinking.

Once the correct ideas characteristic of the advanced class are grasped by the masses, these ideas turn into a material force which changes society and changes the world. In their social practice, men engage in various kinds of struggle and gain rich experience, both from their successes and from their failures. Countless phenomena of the objective external world are reflected in a man's brain through his five sense organs—the organs of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch.

At first, knowledge is perceptual. The leap to conceptual knowledge, i.e., to ideas, occurs when sufficient perceptual knowledge is accumulated. This is one process in cognition. It is the first stage in the whole process of cognition, the stage leading from objective matter to subjective consciousness from existence to ideas. Whether or not one's consciousness or ideas (including theories, policies, plans or measures) do correctly reflect the laws of the objective external world is not yet proved at this stage, in which it is not yet possible to ascertain whether they are correct or not.

Then comes the second stage in the process of cognition, the stage leading from consciousness back to matter, from ideas back to existence, in which the knowledge gained in the first stage is applied in social practice to ascertain whether the theories, policies, plans or measures meet with the anticipated success.

Generally speaking, those that succeed are correct and those that fail are incorrect, and this is especially true of man's struggle with nature. In social struggle, the forces representing the advanced class sometimes suffer defeat not because their ideas are incorrect(!) but because, in the balance of forces engaged in struggle, they are not as powerful for the time being as the forces of reaction; they are therefore temporarily defeated, but they are bound to triumph sooner or later.

Man's knowledge makes another leap through the test of practice. This leap is more important than the previous one. For it is this leap alone that can prove the correctness or incorrectness of the first leap in cognition, i.e., of the ideas, theories, policies, plans or measures formulated in the course of reflecting the objective external world. There is no other way of testing truth.

Furthermore, the one and only purpose of the proletariat in knowing the world is to change it. Often, correct knowledge can be arrived at only after many repetitions of the process leading from matter to consciousness and then back to matter, that is, leading from practice to knowledge and then back to practice. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge, the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge.

Among our comrades there are many who do not yet understand this theory of knowledge. When asked the sources of their ideas, opinions, policies, methods, plans and conclusions, eloquent speeches, and long articles, they consider the questions strange and cannot answer. Nor do they comprehend that matter can be transformed into consciousness and consciousness into matter, although such leaps are phenomena of everyday life. It is therefore necessary to educate our comrades in the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge, so that they can orientate their thinking correctly, become good at investigation and study and at summing up experience, overcome difficulties, commit fewer mistakes, do their work better, and struggle hard so as to build China into a great and powerful socialist country and help the broad masses of the oppressed and exploited throughout the world in fulfillment of our great internationalist duty.

On Practice

by Mao Zedong, 1937

Before Marx, materialism examined the problem of knowledge apart from the social nature of man and apart from his historical development, and was therefore incapable of understanding the dependence of knowledge on social practice, that is, the dependence of knowledge on production and the class struggle.

Above all, Marxists regard man's activity in production as the most fundamental practical activity, the determinant of all his other activities. Man's knowledge depends mainly on his activity in material production, through which he comes gradually to understand the phenomena, the properties and the laws of nature, and the relations between himself and nature; and through his activity in production he also gradually comes to understand, in varying degrees, certain relations that exist between man and man. None of this knowledge can be acquired apart from activity in production. In a classless society every person, as a member of society, joins in common effort with the other members, enters into definite relations of production with them and engages in production to meet man's material needs. In all class societies, the members of the different social classes also enter, in different ways, into definite relations of production and engage in production to meet their material needs. This is the primary source from which human knowledge develops.

Man's social practice is not confined to activity in production, but takes many other forms—class struggle, political life, scientific and artistic pursuits; in short, as a social being, man participates in all spheres of the practical life of society. Thus man, in varying degrees, comes to know the different relations between man and man, not only through his material life but also through his political and cultural life (both of which are intimately bound up with material life). Of these other types of social practice, class struggle in particular, in all its various forms, exerts a profound influence on

the development of man's knowledge. In class society everyone lives as a member of a particular class, and every kind of thinking, without exception, is stamped with the brand of a class.

Marxists hold that in human society activity in production develops step by step from a lower to a higher level and that consequently man's knowledge, whether of nature or of society, also develops step by step from a lower to a higher level, that is, from the shallower to the deeper, from the one-sided to the many-sided. For a very long period in history, men were necessarily confined to a one-sided understanding of the history of society because, for one thing, the bias of the exploiting classes always distorted history and, for another, the small scale of production limited man's outlook. It was not until the modern proletariat emerged along with immense forces of production (large-scale industry) that man was able to acquire a comprehensive, historical understanding of the development of society and turn this knowledge into a science, the science of Marxism.

Marxists hold that man's social practice alone is the criterion of the truth of his knowledge of the external world. What actually happens is that man's knowledge is verified only when he achieves the anticipated results in the process of social practice (material production, class struggle or scientific experiment). If a man wants to succeed in his work, that is, to achieve the anticipated results, he must bring his ideas into correspondence with the laws of the objective external world; if they do not correspond, he will fail in his practice. After he fails, he draws his lessons, corrects his ideas to make them correspond to the laws of the external world, and can thus turn failure into success; this is what is meant by "failure is the mother of success" and "a fall into the pit, a gain in your wit". The dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge places practice in the primary position, holding that human knowledge can in no way be separated from practice and repudiating all the erroneous theories which deny the importance of practice or separate knowledge from practice. Thus Lenin said, *"Practice is higher than (theoretical) knowledge,* for it has not only the dignity of universality, but also of immediate actuality." [1] The Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism has two outstanding characteristics. One is its class nature: it openly avows that dialectical materialism is in the service of the

proletariat. The other is its practicality: it emphasizes the dependence of theory on practice, emphasizes that theory is based on practice and in turn serves practice. The truth of any knowledge or theory is determined not by subjective feelings, but by objective results in social practice. Only social practice can be the criterion of truth. The standpoint of practice is the primary and basic standpoint in the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge. [2]

But how then does human knowledge arise from practice and in turn serve practice? This will become clear if we look at the process of development of knowledge.

In the process of practice, man at first sees only the phenomenal side , the separate aspects, the external relations of things. For instance, some people from outside come to Yenan on a tour of observation. In the first day or two, they see its topography, streets and houses; they meet many people, attend banquets, evening parties and mass meetings, hear talk of various kinds and read various documents, all these being the phenomena, the separate aspects and the external relations of things. This is called the perceptual stage of cognition, namely, the stage of sense perceptions and impressions. That is, these particular things in Yenan act on the sense organs of the members of the observation group, evoke sense perceptions and give rise in their brains to many impressions together with a rough sketch of the external relations among these impressions: this is the first stage of cognition. At this stage, man cannot as yet form concepts, which are deeper, or draw logical conclusions.

As social practice continues, things that give rise to man's sense perceptions and impressions in the course of his practice are repeated many times; then a sudden change (leap) takes place in the brain in the process of cognition, and concepts are formed. Concepts are no longer the phenomena, the separate aspects and the external relations of things; they grasp the essence, the totality and the internal relations of things. Between concepts and sense perceptions there is not only a quantitative but also a qualitative difference. Proceeding further, by means of judgment and inference one is able to draw logical conclusions. The expression in *San Kuo Yen Yi,* [3] "knit the brows

and a stratagem comes to mind", or in everyday language, "let me think it over", refers to man's use of concepts in the brain to form judgments and inferences. This is the second stage of cognition. When the members of the observation group have collected various data and, what is more, have "thought them over", they are able to arrive at the judgment that "the Communist Party's policy of the National United Front Against Japan is thorough, sincere and genuine". Having made this judgment, they can, if they too are genuine about uniting to save the nation, go a step further and draw the following conclusion, "The National United Front Against Japan can succeed." This stage of conception, judgment and inference is the more important stage in the entire process of knowing a thing; it is the stage of rational knowledge. The real task of knowing is, through perception, to arrive at thought, to arrive step by step at the comprehension of the internal contradictions of objective things, of their laws and of the internal relations between one process and another, that is, to arrive at logical knowledge. To repeat, logical knowledge differs from perceptual knowledge in that perceptual knowledge pertains to the separate aspects, the phenomena and the external relations of things, whereas logical knowledge takes a big stride forward to reach the totality, the essence and the internal relations of things and discloses the inner contradictions in the surrounding world. Therefore, logical knowledge is capable of grasping the development of the surrounding world in its totality, in the internal relations of all its aspects.

This dialectical-materialist theory of the process of development of knowledge, basing itself on practice and proceeding from the shallower to the deeper, was never worked out by anybody before the rise of Marxism. Marxist materialism solved this problem correctly for the first time, pointing out both materialistically and dialectically the deepening movement of cognition, the movement by which man in society progresses from perceptual knowledge to logical knowledge in his complex, constantly recurring practice of production and class struggle. Lenin said, "The abstraction of *matter,* of a *law* of nature, the abstraction of *value,* etc., in short , *all* scientific (correct, serious, not absurd) abstractions reflect nature more deeply, truly and *completely."* [4] Marxism-Leninism holds that each of the two stages in the process of cognition has its own characteristics, with knowledge manifesting itself as perceptual at the lower stage and logical at the higher stage, but that both are stages in an integrated process

of cognition. The perceptual and the rational are qualitatively different, but are not divorced from each other; they are unified on the basis of practice. Our practice proves that what is perceived cannot at once be comprehended and that only what is comprehended can be more deeply perceived. Perception only solves the problem of phenomena; theory alone can solve the problem of essence. The solving of both these problems is not separable in the slightest degree from practice. Whoever wants to know a thing has no way of doing so except by coming into contact with it, that is, by living (practicing) in its environment. In feudal society it was impossible to know the laws of capitalist society in advance because capitalism had not yet emerged, the relevant practice was lacking. Marxism could be the product only of capitalist society. Marx, in the era of laissez-faire capitalism, could not concretely know certain laws peculiar to the era of imperialism beforehand, because imperialism, the last stage of capitalism, had not yet emerged and the relevant practice was lacking; only Lenin and Stalin could undertake this task. Leaving aside their genius, the reason why Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin could work out their theories was mainly that they personally took part in the practice of the class struggle and the scientific experimentation of their time; lacking this condition, no genius could have succeeded.

The saying, "without stepping outside his gate the scholar knows all the wide world's affairs", was mere empty talk in past times when technology was undeveloped. Even though this saying can be valid in the present age of developed technology, the people with real personal knowledge are those engaged in practice the wide world over. And it is only when these people have come to "know" through their practice and when their knowledge has reached him through writing and technical media that the "scholar" can indirectly "know all the wide world's affairs". If you want to know a certain thing or a certain class of things directly, you must personally participate in the practical struggle to change reality, to change that thing or class of things, for only thus can you come into contact with them as phenomena; only through personal participation in the practical struggle to change reality can you uncover the essence of that thing or class of things and comprehend them. This is the path to knowledge which every man actually travels, though some people, deliberately distorting matters, argue to the contrary. The most ridiculous person in the world is the "know all" who

picks up a smattering of hearsay knowledge and proclaims himself "the world's Number One authority"; this merely shows that he has not taken a proper measure of himself. Knowledge is a matter of science, and no dishonesty or conceit whatsoever is permissible. What is required is definitely the reverse—honesty and modesty. If you want knowledge, you must take part in the practice of changing reality. If you want to know the taste of a pear, you must change the pear by eating it yourself. If you want to know the structure and properties of the atom, you must make physical and chemical experiments to change the state of the atom. If you want to know the theory and methods of revolution, you must take part in revolution. All genuine knowledge originates in direct experience.

But one cannot have direct experience of everything; as a matter of fact, most of our knowledge comes from indirect experience, for example, all knowledge from past times and foreign lands. To our ancestors and to foreigners, such knowledge was—or is—a matter of direct experience, and this knowledge is reliable if in the course of their direct experience the requirement of "scientific abstraction", spoken of by Lenin, was—or is—fulfilled and objective reality scientifically reflected, otherwise it is not reliable. Hence a man's knowledge consists only of two parts, that which comes from direct experience and that which comes from indirect experience. Moreover, what is indirect experience for me is direct experience for other people. Consequently, considered as a whole, knowledge of any kind is inseparable from direct experience. All knowledge originates in perception of the objective external world through man's physical sense organs. Anyone who denies such perception, denies direct experience, or denies personal participation in the practice that changes reality, is not a materialist. That is why the "know-all" is ridiculous. There is an old Chinese saying, "How can you catch tiger cubs without entering the tiger's lair?" This saying holds true for man's practice and it also holds true for the theory of knowledge. There can be no knowledge apart from practice.

To make clear the dialectical-materialist movement of cognition arising on the basis of the practice which changes reality—to make clear the gradually

deepening movement of cognition—a few additional concrete examples are given below.

In its knowledge of capitalist society, the proletariat was only in the perceptual stage of cognition in the first period of its practice, the period of machine-smashing and spontaneous struggle; it knew only some of the aspects and the external relations of the phenomena of capitalism. The proletariat was then still a "class-in-itself". But when it reached the second period of its practice, the period of conscious and organized economic and political struggles, the proletariat was able to comprehend the essence of capitalist society, the relations of exploitation between social classes and its own historical task; and it was able to do so because of its own practice and because of its experience of prolonged struggle, which Marx and Engels scientifically summed up in all its variety to create the theory of Marxism for the education of the proletariat. It was then that the proletariat became a "class-for-itself".

Similarly with the Chinese people's knowledge of imperialism. The first stage was one of superficial, perceptual knowledge, as shown in the indiscriminate anti-foreign struggles of the Movement of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, the Yi Ho Tuan Movement, and so on. It was only in the second stage that the Chinese people reached the stage of rational knowledge, saw the internal and external contradictions of imperialism and saw the essential truth that imperialism had allied itself with China's comprador and feudal classes to oppress and exploit the great masses of the Chinese people. This knowledge began about the time of the May 4th Movement of 1919.

Next, let us consider war. If those who lead a war lack experience of war, then at the initial stage they will not understand the profound laws pertaining to the directing of a specific war (such as our Agrarian Revolutionary War of the past decade). At the initial stage they will merely experience a good deal of fighting and, what is more, suffer many defeats. But this experience (the experience of battles won and especially of battles lost) enables them to comprehend the inner thread of the whole war, namely, the laws of that specific war, to understand its strategy and tactics,

and consequently to direct the war with confidence. If, at such a moment, the command is turned over to an inexperienced person, then he too will have to suffer a number of defeats (gain experience) before he can comprehend the true laws of the war.

"I am not sure I can handle it." We often hear this remark when a comrade hesitates to accept an assignment. Why is he unsure of himself? Because he has no systematic understanding of the content and circumstances of the assignment, or because he has had little or no contact with such work, and so the laws governing it are beyond him. After a detailed analysis of the nature and circumstances of the assignment, he will feel more sure of himself and do it willingly. If he spends some time at the job and gains experience and if he is a person who is willing to look into matters with an open mind and not one who approaches problems subjectively, one-sidedly and superficially, then he can draw conclusions for himself as to how to go about the job and do it with much more courage. Only those who are subjective, one-sided and superficial in their approach to problems will smugly issue orders or directives the moment they arrive on the scene, without considering the circumstances, without viewing things in their totality (their history and their present state as a whole) and without getting to the essence of things (their nature and the internal relations between one thing and another). Such people are bound to trip and fall.

Thus it can be seen that the first step in the process of cognition is contact with the objects of the external world; this belongs to the stage of perception. The second step is to synthesize the data of perception by arranging and reconstructing them; this belongs to the stage of conception, judgment and inference. It is only when the data of perception are very rich (not fragmentary) and correspond to reality (are not illusory) that they can be the basis for forming correct concepts and theories.

Here two important points must be emphasized. The first, which has been stated before but should be repeated here, is the dependence of rational knowledge upon perceptual knowledge. Anyone who thinks that rational knowledge need not be derived from perceptual knowledge is an idealist. In the history of philosophy there is the "rationalist" school that admits the

reality only of reason and not of experience, believing that reason alone is reliable while perceptual experience is not; this school errs by turning things upside down. The rational is reliable precisely because it has its source in sense perceptions, otherwise it would be like water without a source, a tree without roots, subjective, self-engendered and unreliable. As to the sequence in the process of cognition, perceptual experience comes first; we stress the significance of social practice in the process of cognition precisely because social practice alone can give rise to human knowledge and it alone can start man on the acquisition of perceptual experience from the objective world. For a person who shuts his eyes, stops his ears and totally cuts himself off from the objective world there can be no such thing as knowledge. Knowledge begins with experience—this is the materialism of the theory of knowledge.

The second point is that knowledge needs to be deepened, that the perceptual stage of knowledge needs to be developed to the rational stage—this is the dialectics of the theory of knowledge. [5] To think that knowledge can stop at the lower, perceptual stage and that perceptual knowledge alone is reliable while rational knowledge is not, would be to repeat the historical error of "empiricism". This theory errs in failing to understand that, although the data of perception reflect certain realities in the objective world (I am not speaking here of idealist empiricism which confines experience to so-called introspection), they are merely one-sided and superficial, reflecting things incompletely and not reflecting their essence. Fully to reflect a thing in its totality, to reflect its essence, to reflect its inherent laws, it is necessary through the exercise of thought to reconstruct the rich data of sense perception, discarding the dross and selecting the essential, eliminating the false and retaining the true, proceeding from the one to the other and from the outside to the inside, in order to form a system of concepts and theories—it is necessary to make a leap from perceptual to rational knowledge. Such reconstructed knowledge is not more empty or more unreliable; on the contrary, whatever has been scientifically reconstructed in the process of cognition, on the basis of practice, reflects objective reality, as Lenin said, more deeply, more truly, more fully. As against this, vulgar "practical men" respect experience but despise theory, and therefore cannot have a comprehensive view of an entire objective process, lack clear direction and long-range perspective, and are complacent

over occasional successes and glimpses of the truth. If such persons direct a revolution, they will lead it up a blind alley.

Rational knowledge depends upon perceptual knowledge and perceptual knowledge remains to be developed into rational knowledge— this is the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge. In philosophy, neither "rationalism" nor "empiricism" understands the historical or the dialectical nature of knowledge, and although each of these schools contains one aspect of the truth (here I am referring to materialist, not to idealist, rationalism and empiricism), both are wrong on the theory of knowledge as a whole. The dialectical-materialist movement of knowledge from the perceptual to the rational holds true for a minor process of cognition (for instance, knowing a single thing or task) as well as for a major process of cognition (for instance, knowing a whole society or a revolution).

But the movement of knowledge does not end here. If the dialectical-materialist movement of knowledge were to stop at rational knowledge, only half the problem would be dealt with. And as far as Marxist philosophy is concerned, only the less important half at that. Marxist philosophy holds that the most important problem does not lie in understanding the laws of the objective world and thus being able to explain it, but in applying the knowledge of these laws actively to change the world. From the Marxist viewpoint, theory is important, and its importance is fully expressed in Lenin's statement, "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement." [6] But Marxism emphasizes the importance of theory precisely and only because it can guide action. If we have a correct theory but merely prate about it, pigeonhole it and do not put it into practice, then that theory, however good, is of no significance. Knowledge begins with practice, and theoretical knowledge is acquired through practice and must then return to practice. The active function of knowledge manifests itself not only in the active leap from perceptual to rational knowledge, but—and this is more important—it must manifest itself in the leap from rational knowledge to revolutionary practice. The knowledge which grasps the laws of the world, must be redirected to the practice of changing the world, must be applied anew in the practice of production, in the practice of revolutionary class struggle and revolutionary national

struggle and in the practice of scientific experiment. This is the process of testing and developing theory, the continuation of the whole process of cognition. The problem of whether theory corresponds to objective reality is not, and cannot be, completely solved in the movement of knowledge from the perceptual to the rational, mentioned above.

The only way to solve this problem completely is to redirect rational knowledge to social practice, apply theory to practice and see whether it can achieve the objectives one has in mind. Many theories of natural science are held to be true not only because they were so considered when natural scientists originated them, but because they have been verified in subsequent scientific practice. Similarly, Marxism-Leninism is held to be true not only because it was so considered when it was scientifically formulated by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin but because it has been verified in the subsequent practice of revolutionary class struggle and revolutionary national struggle. Dialectical materialism is universally true because it is impossible for anyone to escape from its domain in his practice. The history of human knowledge tells us that the truth of many theories is incomplete and that this incompleteness is remedied through the test of practice. Many theories are erroneous and it is through the test of practice that their errors are corrected. That is why practice is the criterion of truth and why "the standpoint of life, of practice, should be first and fundamental in the theory of knowledge". [7] Stalin has well said, "Theory becomes purposeless if it is not connected with revolutionary practice, just as practice gropes in the dark if its path is not illuminated by revolutionary theory." [8]

When we get to this point, is the movement of knowledge completed? Our answer is: it is and yet it is not. When men in society throw themselves into the practice of changing a certain objective process (whether natural or social) at a certain stage of its development, they can, as a result of the reflection of the objective process in their brains and the exercise of their subjective activity, advance their knowledge from the perceptual to the rational, and create ideas, theories, plans or programmes which correspond in general to the laws of that objective process. They then apply these ideas, theories, plans or programmes in practice in the same objective process.

And if they can realize the aims they have in mind, that is, if in that same process of practice they can translate, or on the whole translate, those previously formulated ideas, theories, plans or programmes into fact, then the movement of knowledge may be considered completed with regard to this particular process. In the process of changing nature, take for example the fulfillment of an engineering plan, the verification of a scientific hypothesis, the manufacture of an implement or the reaping of a crop; or in the process of changing society, take for example the victory of a strike, victory in a war or the fulfillment of an educational plan. All these may be considered the realization of aims one has in mind. But generally speaking, whether in the practice of changing nature or of changing society, men's original ideas, theories, plans or programmes are seldom realized without any alteration.

This is because people engaged in changing reality are usually subject to numerous limitations; they are limited not only by existing scientific and technological conditions but also by the development of the objective process itself and the degree to which this process has become manifest (the aspects and the essence of the objective process have not yet been fully revealed). In such a situation, ideas, theories, plans or programmes are usually altered partially and sometimes even wholly, because of the discovery of unforeseen circumstances in the course of practice. That is to say, it does happen that the original ideas, theories, plans or programmes fail to correspond with reality either in whole or in part and are wholly or partially incorrect. In many instances, failures have to be repeated many times before errors In knowledge can be corrected and correspondence with the laws of the objective process achieved, and consequently before the subjective can be transformed into the objective, or in other words, before the anticipated results can be achieved in practice. But when that point is reached, no matter how, the movement of human knowledge regarding a certain objective process at a certain stage of its development may be considered completed.

However, so far as the progression of the process is concerned, the movement of human knowledge is not completed. Every process, whether in the realm of nature or of society, progresses and develops by reason of its

internal contradiction and struggle, and the movement of human knowledge should also progress and develop along with it. As far as social movements are concerned, true revolutionary leaders must not only be good at correcting their ideas, theories, plans or programmes when errors are discovered, as has been indicated above; but when a certain objective process has already progressed and changed from one stage of development to another, they must also be good at making themselves and all their fellow-revolutionaries progress and change in their subjective knowledge along with it, that IS to say, they must ensure that the proposed new revolutionary tasks and new working programmes correspond to the new changes in the situation. In a revolutionary period the situation changes very rapidly; if the knowledge of revolutionaries does not change rapidly in accordance with the changed situation, they will be unable to lead the revolution to victory.

It often happens, however, that thinking lags behind reality; this is because man's cognition is limited by numerous social conditions. We are opposed to die-herds in the revolutionary ranks whose thinking fails to advance with changing objective circumstances and has manifested itself historically as Right opportunism. These people fail to see that the struggle of opposites has already pushed the objective process forward while their knowledge has stopped at the old stage. This is characteristic of the thinking of all die-herds. Their thinking is divorced from social practice, and they cannot march ahead to guide the chariot of society; they simply trail behind, grumbling that it goes too fast and trying to drag it back or turn it in the opposite direction.

We are also opposed to "Left" phrase-mongering. The thinking of "Leftists" outstrips a given stage of development of the objective process; some regard their fantasies as truth, while others strain to realize in the present an ideal which can only be realized in the future. They alienate themselves from the current practice of the majority of the people and from the realities of the day, and show themselves adventurist in their actions.

Idealism and mechanical materialism, opportunism and adventurism, are all characterized by the breach between the subjective and the objective, by the

separation of knowledge from practice. The Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge, characterized as it is by scientific social practice, cannot but resolutely oppose these wrong ideologies. Marxists recognize that in the absolute and general process of development of the universe, the development of each particular process is relative, and that hence, in the endless flow of absolute truth, man's knowledge of a particular process at any given stage of development is only relative truth. The sum total of innumerable relative truths constitutes absolute truth. [9] The development of an objective process is full of contradictions and struggles, and so is the development of the movement of human knowledge. All the dialectical movements of the objective world can sooner or later be reflected in human knowledge. In social practice, the process of coming into being, developing and passing away is infinite, and so is the process of coming into being, developing and passing away in human knowledge. As man's practice which changes objective reality in accordance with given ideas, theories, plans or programmes, advances further and further, his knowledge of objective reality likewise becomes deeper and deeper. The movement of change in the world of objective reality is never-ending and so is man's cognition of truth through practice. Marxism-Leninism has in no way exhausted truth but ceaselessly opens up roads to the knowledge of truth in the course of practice. Our conclusion is the concrete, historical unity of the subjective and the objective, of theory and practice, of knowing and doing, and we are opposed to all erroneous ideologies, whether "Left" or Right, which depart from concrete history.

In the present epoch of the development of society, the responsibility of correctly knowing and changing the world has been placed by history upon the shoulders of the proletariat and its party. This process, the practice of changing the world, which is determined in accordance with scientific knowledge, has already reached a historic moment in the world and in China, a great moment unprecedented in human history, that is, the moment for completely banishing darkness from the world and from China and for changing the world into a world of light such as never previously existed. The struggle of the proletariat and the revolutionary people to change the world comprises the fulfillment of the following tasks: to change the objective world and, at the same time, their own subjective world—to change their cognitive ability and change the relations between the

subjective and the objective world. Such a change has already come about in one part of the globe, in the Soviet Union. There the people are pushing forward this process of change. The people of China and the rest of the world either are going through, or will go through, such a process. And the objective world which is to be changed also includes all the opponents of change, who, in order to be changed, must go through a stage of compulsion before they can enter the stage of voluntary, conscious change. The epoch of world communism will be reached when all mankind voluntarily and consciously changes itself and the world.

Discover the truth through practice, and again through practice verify and develop the truth. Start from perceptual knowledge and actively develop it into rational knowledge; then start from rational knowledge and actively guide revolutionary practice to change both the subjective and the objective world. Practice, knowledge, again practice, and again knowledge. This form repeats itself in endless cycles, and with each cycle the content of practice and knowledge rises to a higher level. Such is the whole of the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge, and such is the dialectical-materialist theory of the unity of knowing and doing.

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[1] V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's *The Science of Logic". Collected Works,* Russ . ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 205.

[2] Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach". Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* , in two volumes, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1958, Vol. II, p. 403, and V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,* ring. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1952, pp. 136-4.

[3] *San Kuo Yen Yi (Tales of the Three Kingdoms)* is a famous Chinese historical novel by Lo Kuan-chung (late 14th and early 15th century).

[4] V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's *The Science of Logic", Collected Works,* Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 161.

[5] "In order to understand, it is necessary empirically to begin understanding, study, to rise from empiricism to the universal." (Ibid., p. 197.)

[6] V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected* Works, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1961, Vol. V, p. 369.

[7] V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* , Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, p. 141.

[8] J. V. Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism", *Problems of Leninism,* Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1954, p. 31.

[9] V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* , Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, pp. 129-36.

On Contradiction

by Mao Zedong, 1937

The law of contradiction in things, that is, the law of the unity of opposites, is the basic law of materialist dialectics. Lenin said, "Dialectics in the proper sense is the study of contradiction in *the very essence of objects."* [1] Lenin often called this law the essence of dialectics; he also called it the kernel of dialectics. [2] In studying this law, therefore, we cannot but touch upon a variety of questions, upon a number of philosophical problems. If we can become clear on all these problems, we shall arrive at a fundamental understanding of materialist dialectics. The problems are: the two world outlooks, the universality of contradiction, the particularity of contradiction, the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of a contradiction, the identity and struggle of the aspects of a contradiction, and the place of antagonism in contradiction.

The criticism to which the idealism of the Deborin school has been subjected in Soviet philosophical circles in recent years has aroused great interest among us. Deborin's idealism has exerted a very bad influence in the Chinese Communist Party, and it cannot be said that the dogmatist thinking in our Party is unrelated to the approach of that school. Our present study of philosophy should therefore have the eradication of dogmatist thinking as its main objective.

I. THE TWO WORLD OUTLOOKS

Throughout the history of human knowledge, there have been two conceptions concerning the law of development of the universe, the metaphysical conception and the dialectical conception, which form two opposing world outlooks. Lenin said:

“The two basic (or two possible? or two historically observable?) conceptions of development (evolution) are: development as decrease and increase, as repetition, *and* development as a unity of opposites (the division of a unity into mutually exclusive opposites and their reciprocal relation).” [3]

Here Lenin was referring to these two different world outlooks.

In China another name for metaphysics is *hsuan-hsueh.* For a long period in history whether in China or in Europe, this way of thinking, which is part and parcel of the idealist world outlook, occupied a dominant position in human thought. In Europe, the materialism of the bourgeoisie in its early days was also metaphysical. As the social economy of many European countries advanced to the stage of highly developed capitalism, as the forces of production, the class struggle and the sciences developed to a level unprecedented in history, and as the industrial proletariat became the greatest motive force in historical development, there arose the Marxist world outlook of materialist dialectics. Then, in addition to open and barefaced reactionary idealism, vulgar evolutionism emerged among the bourgeoisie to oppose materialist dialectics.

The metaphysical or vulgar evolutionist world outlook sees things as isolated, static and one-sided. It regards all things in the universe, their forms and their species, as eternally isolated from one another and immutable. Such change as there is can only be an increase or decrease in quantity or a change of place. Moreover, the cause of such an increase or decrease or change of place is not inside things but outside them, that is, the motive force is external. Metaphysicians hold that all the different kinds of things in the universe and all their characteristics have been the same ever since they first came into being. All subsequent changes have simply been increases or decreases in quantity. They contend that a thing can only keep on repeating itself as the same kind of thing and cannot change into anything different. In their opinion, capitalist exploitation, capitalist competition, the individualist ideology of capitalist society, and so on, can all be found in ancient slave society, or even in primitive society, and will exist for ever unchanged. They ascribe the causes of social development to factors external to society, such as geography and climate.

They search in an over-simplified way outside a thing for the causes of its development, and they deny the theory of materialist dialectics which holds that development arises from the contradictions inside a thing. Consequently they can explain neither the qualitative diversity of things, nor the phenomenon of one quality changing into another. In Europe, this mode of thinking existed as mechanical materialism in the 17th and 18th centuries and as vulgar evolutionism at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. In

China, there was the metaphysical thinking exemplified in the saying "Heaven changeth not, likewise the Tao changeth not", [4] and it was supported by the decadent feudal ruling classes for a long time. Mechanical materialism and vulgar evolutionism, which were imported from Europe in the last hundred years, are supported by the bourgeoisie.

As opposed to the metaphysical world outlook, the world outlook of materialist dialectics holds that in order to understand the development of a thing we should study it internally and in its relations with other things; in other words, the development of things should be seen as their internal and necessary self-movement, while each thing in its movement is interrelated with and interacts on the things around it. The fundamental cause of the development of a thing is not external but internal; it lies in the contradictoriness within the thing. There is internal contradiction in every single thing, hence its motion and development. Contradictoriness within a thing is the fundamental cause of its development, while its interrelations and interactions with other things are secondary causes. Thus materialist dialectics effectively combats the theory of external causes, or of an external motive force, advanced by metaphysical mechanical materialism and vulgar evolutionism. It is evident that purely external causes can only give rise to mechanical motion, that is, to changes in scale or quantity, but cannot explain why things differ qualitatively in thousands of ways and why one thing changes into another.

As a matter of fact, even mechanical motion under external force occurs through the internal contradictoriness of things. Simple growth in plants and animals, their quantitative development, is likewise chiefly the result of their internal contradictions. Similarly, social development is due chiefly not to external but to internal causes. Countries with almost the same geographical and climatic conditions display great diversity and unevenness in their development. Moreover, great social changes may take place in one and the same country although its geography and climate remain unchanged. Imperialist Russia changed into the socialist Soviet Union, and feudal Japan, which had locked its doors against the world, changed into imperialist Japan, although no change occurred in the geography and climate of either country. Long dominated by feudalism, China has undergone great changes in the last hundred years and is now changing in the direction of a new China, liberated and-free, and yet no change has occurred in her geography and climate. Changes do take place in the geography and climate of the earth as a whole and in every part of it, but they are insignificant when compared with changes in society; geographical and climatic

changes manifest themselves in terms of tens of thousands of years, while social changes manifest themselves in thousands, hundreds or tens of years, and even in a few years or months in times of revolution. According to materialist dialectics, changes in nature are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in nature.

Changes in society are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in society, that is, the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the contradiction between classes and the contradiction between the old and the new; it is the development of these contradictions that pushes society forward and gives the impetus for the supersession of the old society by the new. Does materialist dialectics exclude external causes? Not at all. It holds that external causes are the condition of change and internal causes are the basis of change, and that external causes become operative through internal causes. In a suitable temperature an egg changes into a chicken, but no temperature can change a stone into a chicken, because each has a different basis. There is constant interaction between the peoples of different countries. In the era of capitalism, and especially in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, the interaction and mutual impact of different countries in the political, economic and cultural spheres are extremely great. The October Socialist Revolution ushered in a new epoch in world history as well as in Russian history. It exerted influence on internal changes in the other countries in the world and, similarly and in a particularly profound way, on internal changes in China. These changes, however, were effected through the inner laws of development of these countries, China included. In battle, one army is victorious and the other is defeated, both the victory and the defeat are determined by internal causes. The one is victorious either because it is strong or because of its competent generalship, the other is vanquished either because it is weak or because of its incompetent generalship; it is through internal causes that external causes become operative. In China in 1927, the defeat of the proletariat by the big bourgeoisie came about through the opportunism then to be found within the Chinese proletariat itself (inside the Chinese Communist Party). When we liquidated this opportunism, the Chinese revolution resumed its advance. Later, the Chinese revolution again suffered severe setbacks at the hands of the enemy, because adventurism had risen within our Party. When we liquidated this adventurism, our cause advanced once again. Thus it can be seen that to lead the revolution to victory, a political party must depend on the correctness of its own political line and the solidity of its own organization.

The dialectical world outlook emerged in ancient times both in China and in Europe. Ancient dialectics, however, had a somewhat spontaneous and naive character; in the social and historical conditions then prevailing, it was not yet able to form a theoretical system, hence it could not fully explain the world and was supplanted by metaphysics. The famous German philosopher Hegel, who lived in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, made most important contributions to dialectics, but his dialectics was idealist. It was not until Marx and Engels, the great protagonists of the proletarian movement, had synthesized the positive achievements in the history of human knowledge and, in particular, critically absorbed the rational elements of Hegelian dialectics and created the great theory of dialectical and historical materialism that an unprecedented revolution occurred in the history of human knowledge. This theory was further developed by Lenin and Stalin. As soon as it spread to China, it wrought tremendous changes in the world of Chinese thought.

This dialectical world outlook teaches us primarily how to observe and analyze the movement of opposites in different things and, on the basis of such analysis, to indicate the methods for resolving contradictions. It is therefore most important for us to understand the law of contradiction in things in a concrete way.

II. THE UNIVERSALITY OF CONTRADICTION

For convenience of exposition, I shall deal first with the universality of contradiction and then proceed to the particularity of contradiction. The reason is that the universality of contradiction can be explained more briefly, for it has been widely recognized ever since the materialist-dialectical world outlook was discovered and materialist dialectics applied with outstanding success to analyzing many aspects of human history and natural history and to changing many aspects of society and nature (as in the Soviet Union) by the great creators and continuers of Marxism--Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin; whereas the particularity of contradiction is still not dearly understood by many comrades, and especially by the dogmatists. They do not understand that it is precisely in the particularity of contradiction that the universality of contradiction resides.

Nor do they understand how important is the study of the particularity of contradiction in the concrete things confronting us for guiding the course of revolutionary practice. Therefore, it is necessary to stress the study of the particularity of contradiction and to explain it at adequate length. For this reason, in our analysis of the law of contradiction in things, we shall first analyze the universality of contradiction, then place special stress on analyzing the particularity of contradiction, and finally return to the universality of contradiction.

The universality or absoluteness of contradiction has a twofold meaning. One is that contradiction exists in the process of development of all things, and the other is that in the process of development of each thing a movement of opposites exists from beginning to end.

Engels said, "Motion itself is a contradiction." [5] Lenin defined the law of the unity of opposites as "the recognition (discovery) of the contradictory, *mutually exclusive,* opposite tendencies in *all* phenomena and processes of nature *(including* mind and society)". [6] Are these ideas correct? Yes, they are. The interdependence of the contradictory aspects present in all things and the struggle between these aspects determine the life of all things and push their development forward. There is nothing that does not contain contradiction; without contradiction nothing would exist.

Contradiction is the basis of the simple forms of motion (for instance, mechanical motion) and still more so of the complex forms of motion.

Engels explained the universality of contradiction as follows:

If simple mechanical change of place contains a contradiction, this is even more true of the higher forms of motion of matter, and especially of organic life and its development. ... life consists precisely and primarily in this--that a being is at each moment itself and yet something else. Life is therefore also a contradiction which is present in things and processes themselves, and which constantly originates and resolves itself; and as soon as the contradiction ceases, life, too, comes to an end, and death steps in. We likewise saw that also in the sphere of thought we could not escape contradictions, and that for example the contradiction between man's inherently unlimited capacity for knowledge and its

actual presence only in men who are externally limited and possess limited cognition finds its solution in what is--at least practically, for us--an endless succession of generations, in infinite progress.

... one of the basic principles of higher mathematics is the contradiction that in certain circumstances straight lines and curves may be the same....

But even lower mathematics teems with contradictions. [7]

Lenin illustrated the universality of contradiction as follows:

"In mathematics: + and - : Differential and integral.
In mechanics: action and reaction.
In physics: positive and negative electricity.
In chemistry: the combination and dissociation of atoms.
In social science: the class struggle." [8]

In war, offense and defense, advance and retreat, victory and defeat are all mutually contradictory phenomena. One cannot exist without the other. The two aspects are at once in conflict and in interdependence, and this constitutes the totality of a war, pushes its development forward and solves its problems.

Every difference in men's concepts should be regarded as reflecting an objective contradiction. Objective contradictions are reflected in subjective thinking, and this process constitutes the contradictory movement of concepts, pushes forward the development of thought, and ceaselessly solves problems in man's thinking.

Opposition and struggle between ideas of different kinds constantly occur within the Party; this is a reflection within the Party of contradictions between classes and between the new and the old in society. If there were no contradictions in the Party and no ideological struggles to resolve them, the Party's life would come to an end.

Thus it is already clear that contradiction exists universally and in all processes, whether in the simple or in the complex forms of motion, whether in objective phenomena or ideological phenomena. But does contradiction also exist at the initial stage of each process?

Is there a movement of opposites from beginning to end in the process of development of every single thing?

As can be seen from the articles written by Soviet philosophers criticizing it, the Deborin school maintains that contradiction appears not at the inception of a process but only when it has developed to a certain stage. If this were the case, then the cause of the development of the process before that stage would be external and not internal. Deborin thus reverts to the metaphysical theories of external causality and of mechanism. Applying this view in the analysis of concrete problems, the Deborin school sees only differences but not contradictions between the kulaks and the peasants in general under existing conditions in the Soviet Union, thus entirely agreeing with Bukharin. In analyzing the French Revolution, it holds that before the Revolution there were likewise only differences but not contradictions within the Third Estate, which was composed of the workers, the peasants and the bourgeoisie. These views of the Deborin school are anti-Marxist. This school does not understand that each and every difference already contains contradiction and that difference itself is contradiction. Labor and capital have been in contradiction ever since the two classes came into being, only at first the contradiction had not yet become intense. Even under the social conditions existing in the Soviet Union, there is a difference between workers and peasants and this very difference is a contradiction, although, unlike the contradiction between labor and capital, it will not become intensified into antagonism or assume the form of class struggle; the workers and the peasants have established a firm alliance in the course of socialist construction and are gradually resolving this contradiction in the course of the advance from socialism to communism. The question is one of different kinds of contradiction, not of the presence or absence of contradiction. Contradiction is universal and absolute, it is present in the process of development of all things and permeates every process from beginning to end.

What is meant by the emergence of a new process? The old unity with its constituent opposites yields to a new unity with its constituent opposites, whereupon a new process emerges to replace the old. The old process ends and the new one begins. The new process contains new contradictions and begins its own history of the development of contradictions.

As Lenin pointed out, Marx in his *Capital* gave a model analysis of this movement of opposites which runs through the process of development of things

from beginning to end. This is the method that must be employed in studying the development of all things. Lenin, too, employed this method correctly and adhered to it in all his writings.

In his *Capital,* Marx first analyses the simplest, most ordinary and fundamental, most common and everyday *relation* of bourgeois (commodity) society, a relation encountered billions of times, viz. the exchange of commodities. In this very simple phenomenon (in this "cell" of bourgeois society) analysis reveals *all* the contradictions (or the germs of *all* the contradictions) of modern society. The subsequent exposition shows us the development *(both* growth *and* movement) of these contradictions and of this society in the [summation] of its individual parts, from its beginning to its end.

Lenin added, "Such must also be the method of exposition (or study) of dialectics in general." [9]

Chinese Communists must learn this method; only then will they be able to correctly analyze the history and the present state of the Chinese revolution and infer its future.

III. THE PARTICULARITY OF CONTRADICTION

Contradiction is present in the process of development of all things; it permeates the process of development of each thing from beginning to end. This is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction which we have discussed above. Now let us discuss the particularity and relativity of contradiction.

This problem should be studied on several levels.

First, the contradiction in each form of motion of matter has its particularity. Man's knowledge of matter is knowledge of its forms of motion, because there is nothing in this world except matter in motion and this motion must assume certain forms. In considering each form of motion of matter, we must observe the

points which it has in common with other forms of motion. But what is especially important and necessary, constituting as it does the foundation of our knowledge of a thing, is to observe what is particular to this form of motion of matter, namely, to observe the qualitative difference between this form of motion and other forms. Only when we have done so can we distinguish between things. Every form of motion contains within itself its own particular contradiction. This particular contradiction constitutes the particular essence which distinguishes one thing from another. It is the internal cause or, as it may be called, the basis for the immense variety of things in the world. There are many forms of motion in nature, mechanical motion, sound, light, heat, electricity, dissociation, combination, and so on. All these forms are interdependent, but in its essence each is different from the others. The particular essence of each form of motion is determined by its own particular contradiction. This holds true not only for nature but also for social and ideological phenomena. Every form of society, every form of ideology, has its own particular contradiction and particular essence.

The sciences are differentiated precisely on the basis of the particular contradictions inherent in their respective objects of study. Thus the contradiction peculiar to a certain field of phenomena constitutes the object of study for a specific branch of science. For example, positive and negative numbers in mathematics; action and reaction in mechanics; positive and negative electricity in physics; dissociation and combination in chemistry; forces of production and relations of production, classes and class struggle, in social science; offense and defense in military science; idealism and materialism, the metaphysical outlook and the dialectical outlook, in philosophy; and so on--all these are the objects of study of different branches of science precisely because each branch has its own particular contradiction and particular essence. Of course, unless we understand the universality of contradiction, we have no way of discovering the universal cause or universal basis for the movement or development of things; however, unless we study the particularity of contradiction, we have no way of determining the particular essence of a thing which differentiates it from other things, no way of discovering the particular cause or particular basis for the movement or development of a thing, and no way of distinguishing one thing from another or of demarcating the fields of science.

As regards the sequence in the movement of man's knowledge, there is always a gradual growth from the knowledge of individual and particular things to the

knowledge of things in general. Only after man knows the particular essence of many different things can he proceed to generalization and know the common essence of things.

When man attains the knowledge of this common essence, he uses it as a guide and proceeds to study various concrete things which have not yet been studied, or studied thoroughly, and to discover the particular essence of each; only thus is he able to supplement, enrich and develop his knowledge of their common essence and prevent such knowledge from withering or petrifying. These are the two processes of cognition: one, from the particular to the general, and the other, from the general to the particular. Thus cognition always moves in cycles and (so long as scientific method is strictly adhered to) each cycle advances human knowledge a step higher and so makes it more and more profound. Where our dogmatists err on this question is that, on the one hand, they do not understand that we have to study the particularity of contradiction and know the particular essence of individual things before we can adequately know the universality of contradiction and the common essence of things, and that, on the other hand, they do not understand that after knowing the common essence of things, we must go further and study the concrete things that have not yet been thoroughly studied or have only just emerged. Our dogmatists are lazy-bones. They refuse to undertake any painstaking study of concrete things, they regard general truths as emerging out of the void, they turn them into purely abstract unfathomable formulas, and thereby completely deny and reverse the normal sequence by which man comes to know truth. Nor do they understand the interconnection of the two processes in cognition-- from the particular to the general and then from the general to the particular. They understand nothing of the Marxist theory of knowledge.

It is necessary not only to study the particular contradiction and the essence determined thereby of every great system of the forms of motion of matter, but also to study the particular contradiction and the essence of each process in the long course of development of each form of motion of matter. In every form of motion, each process of development which is real (and not imaginary) is qualitatively different. Our study must emphasize and start from this point.

Qualitatively different contradictions can only be resolved by qualitatively different methods. For instance, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is resolved by the method of socialist revolution; the contradiction

between the great masses of the people and the feudal system is resolved by the method of democratic revolution; the contradiction between the colonies and imperialism is resolved by the method of national revolutionary war; the contradiction between the working class and the peasant class in socialist society is resolved by the method of collectivization and mechanization in agriculture; contradiction within the Communist Party is resolved by the method of criticism and self-criticism; the contradiction between society and nature is resolved by the method of developing the productive forces. Processes change, old processes and old contradictions disappear, new processes and new contradictions emerge, and the methods of resolving contradictions differ accordingly. In Russia, there was a fundamental difference between the contradiction resolved by the February Revolution and the contradiction resolved by the October Revolution, as well as between the methods used to resolve them. The principle of using different methods to resolve different contradictions is one which Marxist-Leninists must strictly observe. The dogmatists do not observe this principle; they do not understand that conditions differ in different kinds of revolution and so do not understand that different methods should be used to resolve different contradictions; on the contrary, they invariably adopt what they imagine to be an unalterable formula and arbitrarily apply it everywhere, which only causes setbacks to the revolution or makes a sorry mess of what was originally well done.

In order to reveal the particularity of the contradictions in any process in the development of a thing, in their totality or interconnections, that is, in order to reveal the essence of the process, it is necessary to reveal the particularity of the two aspects of each of the contradictions in that process; otherwise it will be impossible to discover the essence of the process. This likewise requires the utmost attention in our study.

There are many contradictions in the course of development of any major thing. For instance, in the course of China's bourgeois-democratic revolution, where the conditions are exceedingly complex, there exist the contradiction between all the oppressed classes in Chinese society and imperialism, the contradiction between the great masses of the people and feudalism, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the contradiction between the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie on the one hand and the bourgeoisie on the other, the contradiction between the various reactionary ruling groups, and so on. These contradictions cannot be treated in the same way since each has its own particularity; moreover, the two aspects of each contradiction cannot be treated

in the same way since each aspect has its own characteristics. We who are engaged in the Chinese revolution should not only understand the particularity of these contradictions in their totality, that is, in their interconnections, but should also study the two aspects of each contradiction as the only means of understanding the totality. When we speak of understanding each aspect of a contradiction, we mean understanding what specific position each aspect occupies, what concrete forms it assumes in its interdependence and in its contradiction with its opposite, and what concrete methods are employed in the struggle with its opposite, when the two are both interdependent and in contradiction, and also after the interdependence breaks down. It is of great importance to study these problems. Lenin meant just this when he said that the most essential thing in Marxism, the living soul of Marxism, is the concrete analysis of concrete conditions. [10] Our dogmatists have violated Lenin's teachings; they never use their brains to analyze anything concretely, and in their writings and speeches they always use stereotypes devoid of content, thereby creating a very bad style of work in our Party.

In studying a problem, we must shun subjectivity, one-sidedness and superficiality. To be subjective means not to look at problems objectively, that is, not to use the materialist viewpoint in looking at problems. I have discussed this in my essay "On Practice". To be one-sided means not to look at problems all-sidedly, for example, to understand only China but not Japan, only the Communist Party but not the Kuomintang, only the proletariat but not the bourgeoisie, only the peasants but not the landlords, only the favorable conditions but not the difficult ones, only the past but not the future, only individual parts but not the whole, only the defects but not the achievements, only the plaintiff's case but not the defendant's, only underground revolutionary work but not open revolutionary work, and so on. In a word, it means not to understand the characteristics of both aspects of a contradiction. This is what we mean by looking at a problem one-sidedly. Or it may be called seeing the part but not the whole, seeing the trees but not the forest. That way it is impossible to find the method for resolving a contradiction, it is impossible to accomplish the tasks of the revolution, to carry out assignments well or to develop inner-Party ideological struggle correctly. When Sun Wu Tzu said in discussing military science, "Know the enemy and know yourself, and you can fight a hundred battles with no danger of defeat", [11] he was referring to the two sides in a battle. Wei Chengi [12] of the Tang Dynasty also understood the error of one-sidedness when he said, "Listen to both sides and you will be enlightened, heed only one side and you will be benighted ." But our comrades often look at

problems one-sidedly, and so they often run into snags. In the novel *Shui Hu Chuan,* Sung Chiang thrice attacked Chu Village. [13] Twice he was defeated because he was ignorant of the local conditions and used the wrong method. Later he changed his method; first he investigated the situation, and he familiarized himself with the maze of roads, then he broke up the alliance between the Li, Hu and Chu Villages and sent his men in disguise into the enemy camp to lie in wait, using a stratagem similar to that of the Trojan Horse in the foreign story. And on the third occasion he won. There are many examples of materialist dialectics in *Shui Hu Chuan,* of which the episode of the three attacks on Chu Village is one of the best. Lenin said:

"...in order to really know an object we must embrace, study, all its sides, all connections and 'mediations'. We shall never achieve this completely, but the demand for all-sidedness is a safeguard against mistakes and rigidity." [14]

We should remember his words. To be superficial means to consider neither the characteristics of a contradiction in its totality nor the characteristics of each of its aspects; it means to deny the necessity for probing deeply into a thing and minutely studying the characteristics of its contradiction, but instead merely to look from afar and, after glimpsing the rough outline, immediately to try to resolve the contradiction (to answer a question, settle a dispute, handle work, or direct a military operation). This way of doing things is bound to lead to trouble. The reason the dogmatist and empiricist comrades in China have made mistakes lies precisely in their subjectivist, one-sided and superficial way of looking at things. To be one-sided and superficial is at the same time to be subjective. For all objective things are actually interconnected and are governed by inner laws, but instead of undertaking the task of reflecting things as they really are some people only look at things one-sidedly or superficially and who know neither their interconnections nor their inner laws, and so their method is subjectivist.

Not only does the whole process of the movement of opposites in the development of a thing, both in their interconnections and in each of the aspects, have particular features to *which* we must give attention, but each stage in the process has its particular features to which we must give attention too.

The fundamental contradiction in the process of development of a thing and the essence of the process determined by this fundamental contradiction will not disappear until the process is completed; but in a lengthy process the conditions

usually differ at each stage. The reason is that, although the nature of the fundamental contradiction in the process of development of a thing and the essence of the process remain unchanged, the fundamental contradiction becomes more and more intensified as it passes from one stage to another in the lengthy process. In addition, among the numerous major and minor contradictions which are determined or influenced by the fundamental contradiction, some become intensified, some are temporarily or partially resolved or mitigated, and some new ones emerge; hence the process is marked by stages. If people do not pay attention to the stages in the process of development of a thing, they cannot deal with its contradictions properly.

For instance, when the capitalism of the era of free competition developed into imperialism, there was no change in the class nature of the two classes in fundamental contradiction, namely, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, or in the capitalist essence of society; however, the contradiction between these two classes became intensified, the contradiction between monopoly and non-monopoly capital emerged, the contradiction between the colonial powers and the colonies became intensified, the contradiction among the capitalist countries resulting from their uneven development manifested itself with particular sharpness, and thus there arose the special stage of capitalism, the stage of imperialism. Leninism is the Marxism of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution precisely because Lenin and Stalin have correctly explained these contradictions and correctly formulated the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution for their resolution.

Take the process of China's bourgeois-democratic revolution, which began with the Revolution of 1911; it, too, has several distinct stages. In particular, the revolution in its period of bourgeois leadership and the revolution in its period of proletarian leadership represent two vastly different historical stages. In other words, proletarian leadership has fundamentally changed the whole face of the revolution, has brought about a new alignment of classes, given rise to a tremendous upsurge in the peasant revolution, imparted thoroughness to the revolution against imperialism and feudalism, created the possibility of the transition from the democratic revolution to the socialist revolution, and so on. None of these was possible in the period when the revolution was under bourgeois leadership. Although no change has taken place in the nature of the fundamental contradiction in the process as a whole, *i.e.,* in the anti-imperialist, anti- feudal, democratic-revolutionary nature of the process (the opposite of which is its semi-colonial and semi-feudal nature), nonetheless this process has

passed through several stages of development in the course of more than twenty years; during this time many great events have taken place-- the failure of the Revolution of 1911 and the establishment of the regime of the Northern warlords, the formation of the first national united front and the revolution of 1924-27, the break-up of the united front and the desertion of the bourgeoisie to the side of the counterrevolution, the wars among the new warlords, the Agrarian Revolutionary War, the establishment of the second national united front and the War of Resistance Against Japan. These stages are marked by particular features such as the intensification of certain contradictions *(e.g.,* the Agrarian Revolutionary War and the Japanese invasion of the four northeastern provinces), the partial or temporary resolution of other contradictions *(e.g.,* the destruction of the Northern warlords and our confiscation of the land of the landlords), and the emergence of yet other contradictions *(e.g.,* the conflicts among the new warlords, and the landlords' recapture of the land after the loss of our revolutionary base areas in the south).

In studying the particularities of the contradictions at each stage in the process of development of a thing, we must not only observe them in their interconnections or their totality, we must also examine the two aspects of each contradiction.

For instance, consider the Kuomintang and the Communist Party. Take one aspect, the Kuomintang. In the period of the first united front, the Kuomintang carried out Sun Yat-sen's Three Great Policies of alliance with Russia, cooperation with the Communist Party, and assistance to the peasants and workers; hence it was revolutionary and vigorous, it was an alliance of various classes for the democratic revolution. After 1927, however, the Kuomintang changed into its opposite and became a reactionary bloc of the landlords and big bourgeoisie. After the Sian Incident in December 1936, it began another change in the direction of ending the civil war and cooperating with the Communist Party for joint opposition to Japanese imperialism. Such have been the particular features of the Kuomintang in the three stages. Of course, these features have arisen from a variety of causes.

Now take the other aspect, the Chinese Communist Party. In the period of the first united front, the Chinese Communist Party was in its infancy; it courageously led the revolution of 1924-27 but revealed its immaturity in its understanding of the character, the tasks and the methods of the revolution, and consequently it became possible for Chen Tu-hsiuism , which appeared during

the latter part of this revolution, to assert itself and bring about the defeat of the revolution. After 1927, the Communist Party courageously led the Agrarian Revolutionary War and created the revolutionary army and revolutionary base areas; however, it committed adventurist errors which brought about very great losses both to the army and to the base areas. Since 1935 the Party has corrected these errors and has been leading the new united front for resistance to Japan; this great struggle is now developing. At the present stage, the Communist Party is a Party that has gone through the test of two revolutions and acquired a wealth of experience. Such have been the particular features of the Chinese Communist Party in the three stages. These features, too, have arisen from a variety of causes. Without studying both these sets of features we cannot understand the particular relations between the two parties during the various stages of their development, namely, the establishment of a united front, the break-up of the united front, and the establishment of another united front. What is even more fundamental for the study of the particular features of the two parties is the examination of the class basis of the two parties and the resultant contradictions which have arisen between each party and other forces at different periods. For instance, in the period of its first cooperation with the Communist Party, the Kuomintang stood in contradiction to foreign imperialism and was therefore anti-imperialist; on the other hand, it stood in contradiction to the great masses of the people within the country--although in words it promised many benefits to the working people, in fact it gave them little or nothing. In the period when it carried on the anti-Communist war, the Kuomintang collaborated with imperialism and feudalism against the great masses of the people and wiped out all the gains they had won in the revolution, and thereby intensified its contradictions with them.

In the present period of the anti-Japanese war, the Kuomintang stands in contradiction to Japanese imperialism and wants cooperation with the Communist Party, without however relaxing its struggle against the Communist Party and the people or its oppression of them. As for the Communist Party, it has always, in every period, stood with the great masses of the people against imperialism and feudalism, but in the present period of the anti-Japanese war, it has adopted a moderate policy towards the Kuomintang and the domestic feudal forces because the Kuomintang has pressed itself in favor of resisting Japan. The above circumstances have resulted now in alliance between the two parties and now in struggle between them, and even during the periods of alliance there has been a complicated state of simultaneous alliance and struggle. If we do not study the particular features of both aspects of the contradiction, we shall fail to

understand not only the relations of each party with the other forces, but also the relations between the two parties.

It can thus be seen that in studying the particularity of any kind of contradiction--the contradiction in each form of motion of matter, the contradiction in each of its processes of development, the two aspects of the contradiction in each process, the contradiction at each stage of a process, and the two aspects of the contradiction at each stage--in studying the particularity of all these contradictions, we must not be subjective and arbitrary but must analyze it concretely. Without concrete analysis there can be no knowledge of the particularity of any contradiction. We must always remember Lenin's words, the concrete analysis of concrete conditions.

Marx and Engels were the first to provide us with excellent models of such concrete analysis.

When Marx and Engels applied the law of contradiction in things to the study of the socio-historical process, they discovered the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, they discovered the contradiction between the exploiting and exploited classes and also the resultant contradiction between the economic base and its superstructure (politics, ideology, etc.), and they discovered how these contradictions inevitably lead to different kinds of social revolution in different kinds of class society.

When Marx applied this law to the study of the economic structure of capitalist society, he discovered that the basic contradiction of this society is the contradiction between the social character of production and the private character of ownership. This contradiction manifests itself in the contradiction between the organized character of production in individual enterprises and the anarchic character of production in society as a whole. In terms of class relations, it manifests itself in the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Because the range of things is vast and there is no limit to their development, what is universal in one context becomes particular in another. Conversely, what is particular in one context becomes universal in another. The contradiction in the capitalist system between the social character of production and the private ownership of the means of production is common to all countries where capitalism exists and develops; as far as capitalism is concerned, this constitutes

the universality of contradiction. But this contradiction of capitalism belongs only to a certain historical stage in the general development of class society; as far as the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production in class society as a whole is concerned, it constitutes the particularity of contradiction. However, in the course of dissecting the particularity of all these contradictions in capitalist society, Marx gave a still more profound, more adequate and more complete elucidation of the universality of the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production in class society in general.

Since the particular is united with the universal and since the universality as well as the particularity of contradiction is inherent in everything, universality residing in particularity, we should, when studying an object, try to discover both the particular and the universal and their interconnection, to discover both particularity and universality and also their interconnection within the object itself, and to discover the interconnections of this object with the many objects outside it. When Stalin explained the historical roots of Leninism in his famous work, *The Foundations of Leninism,* he analyzed the international situation in which Leninism arose, analyzed those contradictions of capitalism which reached their culmination under imperialism, and showed how these contradictions made proletarian revolution a matter for immediate action and created favorable conditions for a direct onslaught on capitalism. What is more, he analyzed the reasons why Russia became the cradle of Leninism, why tsarist Russia became the focus of all the contradictions of imperialism, and why it was possible for the Russian proletariat to become the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat. Thus, Stalin analyzed the universality of contradiction in imperialism, showing why Leninism is the Marxism of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, and at the same time analyzed the particularity of tsarist Russian imperialism within this general contradiction, showing why Russia became the birthplace of the theory and tactics of proletarian revolution and how the universality of contradiction is contained in this particularity. Stalin's analysis provides us with a model for understanding the particularity and the universality of contradiction and their interconnection.

On the question of using dialectics in the study of objective phenomena, Marx and Engels, and likewise Lenin and Stalin, always enjoin people not to be in any way subjective and arbitrary but, from the concrete conditions in the actual objective movement of these phenomena, to discover their concrete contradictions, the concrete position of each aspect of every contradiction and

the concrete interrelations of the contradictions. Our dogmatists do not have this attitude in study and therefore can never get anything right. We must take warning from their failure and learn to acquire this attitude, which is the only correct one in study.

The relationship between the universality and the particularity of contradiction is the relationship between the general character and the individual character of contradiction. By the former we mean that contradiction exists in and runs through all processes from beginning to end; motion, things, processes, thinking--all are contradictions. To deny contradiction is to deny everything. This is a universal truth for all times and all countries, which admits of no exception. Hence the general character, the absoluteness of contradiction. But this general character is contained in every individual character; without individual character there can be no general character. If all individual character were removed, what general character would remain? It is because each contradiction is particular that individual character arises. All individual character exists conditionally and temporarily, and hence is relative .

This truth concerning general and individual character, concerning absoluteness and relativity, is the quintessence of the problem of contradiction in things; failure to understand it is tantamount to abandoning dialectics.

IV. THE PRINCIPAL CONTRADICTION AND THE PRINCIPAL ASPECT OF A CONTRADICTION

There are still two points in the problem of the particularity of contradiction which must be singled out for analysis, namely, the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of a contradiction.

There are many contradictions in the process of development of a complex thing, and one of them is necessarily the principal contradiction whose existence and development determine or influence the existence and development of the other contradictions.

For instance, in capitalist society the two forces in contradiction, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, form the principal contradiction. The other contradictions, such as those between the remnant feudal class and the bourgeoisie, between the peasant petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie, between the proletariat and the peasant petty bourgeoisie, between the non-monopoly capitalists and the monopoly capitalists, between bourgeois democracy and bourgeois fascism, among the capitalist countries and between imperialism and the colonies, are all determined or influenced by this principal contradiction.

In a semi-colonial country such as China, the relationship between the principal contradiction and the non-principal contradictions presents a complicated picture.

When imperialism launches a war of aggression against such a country, all its various classes, except for some traitors, can temporarily unite in a national war against imperialism. At such a time, the contradiction between imperialism and the country concerned becomes the principal contradiction, while all the contradictions among the various classes within the country (including what was the principal contradiction, between the feudal system and the great masses of the people) are temporarily relegated to a secondary and subordinate position. So it was in China in the Opium War of 1840, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 and the Yi Ho Tuan War of 1900, and so it is now in the present Sino-Japanese War.

But in another situation, the contradictions change position. When imperialism carries on its oppression not by war, but by milder means--political, economic and cultural--the ruling classes in semi-colonial countries capitulate to imperialism, and the two form an alliance for the joint oppression of the masses of the people. At such a time, the masses often resort to civil war against the alliance of imperialism and the feudal classes, while imperialism often employs indirect methods rather than direct action in helping the reactionaries in the semi-colonial countries to oppress the people, and thus the internal contradictions become particularly sharp. This is what happened in China in the Revolutionary War of 1911, the Revolutionary War of 1924-27, and the ten years of Agrarian Revolutionary War after 1927. Wars among the various reactionary ruling groups in the semi-colonial countries, e.g., the wars among the warlords in China, fall into the same category.

When a revolutionary civil war develops to the point of threatening the very existence of imperialism and its running dogs, the domestic reactionaries, imperialism often adopts other methods in order to maintain its rule; it either tries to split the revolutionary front from within or sends armed forces to help the domestic reactionaries directly. At such a time, foreign imperialism and domestic reaction stand quite openly at one pole while the masses of the people stand at the other pole, thus forming the principal contradiction which determines or influences the development of the other contradictions. The assistance given by various capitalist countries to the Russian reactionaries after the October Revolution is an example of armed intervention. Chiang Kai-shek's betrayal in 1927 is an example of splitting the revolutionary front.

But whatever happens, there is no doubt at all that at every stage in the development of a process, there is only one principal contradiction which plays the leading role.

Hence, if in any process there are a number of contradictions, one of them must be the principal contradiction playing the leading and decisive role, while the rest occupy a secondary and subordinate position. Therefore, in studying any complex process in which there are two or more contradictions, we must devote every effort to funding its principal contradiction. Once this principal contradiction is grasped, all problems can be readily solved. This is the method Marx taught us in his study of capitalist society. Likewise Lenin and Stalin taught us this method when they studied imperialism and the general crisis of capitalism and when they studied the Soviet economy. There are thousands of scholars and men of action who do not understand it, and the result is that, lost in a fog, they are unable to get to the heart of a problem and naturally cannot find a way to resolve its contradictions.

As we have said, one must not treat all the contradictions in a process as being equal but must distinguish between the principal and the secondary contradictions, and pay special attention to grasping the principal one. But, in any given contradiction, whether principal or secondary, should the two contradictory aspects be treated as equal? Again, no. In any contradiction the development of the contradictory aspects is uneven. Sometimes they seem to be in equilibrium, which is however only temporary and relative, while unevenness is basic. Of the two contradictory aspects, one must be principal and the other secondary. The principal aspect is the one playing the leading role in the

contradiction. The nature of a thing is determined mainly by the principal aspect of a contradiction, the aspect which has gained the dominant position.

But this situation is not static; the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction transform themselves into each other and the nature of the thing changes accordingly. In a given process or at a given stage in the development of a contradiction, A is the principal aspect and B is the non-principal aspect; at another stage or in another process the roles are reversed--a change determined by the extent of the increase or decrease in the force of each aspect in its struggle against the other in the course of the development of a thing.

We often speak of "the new superseding the old". The supersession of the old by the new is a general, eternal and inviolable law of the universe. The transformation of one thing into another, through leaps of different forms in accordance with its essence and external conditions--this is the process of the new superseding the old. In each thing there is contradiction between its new and its old aspects, and this gives rise to a series of struggles with many twists and turns. As a result of these struggles, the new aspect changes from being minor to being major and rises to predominance, while the old aspect changes from being major to being minor and gradually dies out. And the moment the new aspect gains dominance over the old, the old thing changes qualitatively into a new thing. It can thus be seen that the nature of a thing is mainly determined by the principal aspect of the contradiction, the aspect which has gained predominance. When the principal aspect which has gained predominance changes, the nature of a thing changes accordingly.

In capitalist society, capitalism has changed its position from being a subordinate force in the old feudal era to being the dominant force, and the nature of society has accordingly changed from feudal to capitalist. In the new, capitalist era, the feudal forces changed from their former dominant position to a subordinate one, gradually dying out. Such was the case, for example, in Britain and France. With the development of the productive forces, the bourgeoisie changes from being a new class playing a progressive role to being an old class playing a reactionary role, until it is finally overthrown by the proletariat and becomes a class deprived of privately owned means of production and stripped of power, when it, too, gradually dies out. The proletariat, which is much more numerous than the bourgeoisie and grows simultaneously with it but under its rule, is a new force which, initially subordinate to the bourgeoisie, gradually gains strength, becomes

an independent class playing the leading role in history, and finally seizes political power and becomes the ruling class. Thereupon the nature of society changes and the old capitalist society becomes the new socialist society. This is the path already taken by the Soviet Union, a path that all other countries will inevitably take.

Look at China, for instance. Imperialism occupies the principal position in the contradiction in which China has been reduced to a semi-colony, it oppresses the Chinese people, and China has been changed from an independent country into a semi-colonial one. But this state of affairs will inevitably change; in the struggle between the two sides, the power of the Chinese people which is growing under the leadership of the proletariat will inevitably change China from a semi-colony into an independent country, whereas imperialism will be overthrown and old China will inevitably change into New China.

The change of old China into New China also involves a change in the relation between the old feudal forces and the new popular forces within the country. The old feudal landlord class will be overthrown, and from being the ruler it will change into being the ruled; and this class, too, will gradually die out. From being the ruled the people, led by the proletariat, will become the rulers. Thereupon, the nature of Chinese society will change and the old, semi-colonial and semi-feudal society will change into a new democratic society.

Instances of such reciprocal transformation are found in our past experience. The Ching Dynasty which ruled China for nearly three hundred years was overthrown in the Revolution of 1911, and the revolutionary *Tung Meng Hui* under Sun Yat-sen's leadership was victorious for a time. In the Revolutionary War of 1924-27, the revolutionary forces of the Communist-Kuomintang alliance in the south changed from being weak to being strong and won victory in the Northern Expedition, while the Northern warlords who once ruled the roost were overthrown. In 1927, the people's forces led by the Communist Party were greatly reduced numerically under the attacks of Kuomintang reaction, but with the elimination of opportunism within their ranks they gradually grew again. In the revolutionary base areas under Communist leadership, the peasants have been transformed from being the ruled to being the rulers, while the landlords have undergone a reverse transformation. It is always so in the world, the new displacing the old, the old being superseded by the new, the old being eliminated to make way for the new, and the new emerging out of the old.

At certain times in the revolutionary struggle, the difficulties outweigh the favorable conditions and so constitute the principal aspect of the contradiction and the favorable conditions constitute the secondary aspect. But through their efforts the revolutionaries can overcome the difficulties step by step and open up a favorable new situation; thus a difficult situation yields place to a favorable one. This is what happened after the failure of the revolution in China in 1927 and during the Long March of the Chinese Red Army. In the present Sino-Japanese War, China is again in a difficult position, but we can change this and fundamentally transform the situation as between China and Japan. Conversely, favorable conditions can be transformed into difficulty if the revolutionaries make mistakes. Thus the victory of the revolution of 1924-27 turned into defeat. The revolutionary base areas which grew up in the southern provinces after 1927 had all suffered defeat by 1934.

When we engage in study, the same holds good for the contradiction in the passage from ignorance to knowledge. At the very beginning of our study of Marxism, our ignorance of, our scanty acquaintance with Marxism stands in contradiction to knowledge of Marxism. But by assiduous study, ignorance can be transformed into knowledge, scanty knowledge into substantial knowledge, and blindness in the application of Marxism into mastery of its application.

Some people think that this is not true of certain contradictions. For instance, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the productive forces are the principal aspect; in the contradiction between theory and practice, practice is the principal aspect; in the contradiction between the economic base and the superstructure, the economic base is the principal aspect; and there is no change in their respective positions. This is the mechanical materialist conception, not the dialectical materialist conception. True, the productive forces, practice and the economic base generally play the principal and decisive role; whoever denies this is not a materialist. But it must also be admitted that in certain conditions, such aspects as the relations of production, theory and the superstructure in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role. When it is impossible for the productive forces to develop without a change in the relations of production, then the change in the relations of production plays the principal and decisive role.

The creation and advocacy of revolutionary theory plays the principal and decisive role in those times of which Lenin said, "Without revolutionary theory

there can be no revolutionary movement." [15] When a task, no matter which, has to be performed, but there is as yet no guiding line, method, plan or policy, the principal and decisive thing is to decide on a guiding line, method, plan or policy. When the superstructure (politics, culture, etc.) obstructs the development of the economic base, political and cultural changes become principal and decisive. Are we going against materialism when we say this? No. The reason is that while we recognize that in the general development of history the material determines the mental and social being determines social consciousness, we also--and indeed must--recognize the reaction of mental on material things, of social consciousness on social being and of the superstructure on the economic base. This does not go against materialism; on the contrary, it avoids mechanical materialism and firmly upholds dialectical materialism.

In studying the particularity of contradiction, unless we examine these two facets--the principal and the non-principal contradictions in a process, and the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction--that is, unless we examine the distinctive character of these two facets of contradiction, we shall get bogged down in abstractions, be unable to understand contradiction concretely and consequently be unable to find the correct method of resolving it. The distinctive character or particularity of these two facets of contradiction represents the unevenness of the forces that are in contradiction. Nothing in this world develops absolutely evenly; we must oppose the theory of even development or the theory of equilibrium. Moreover, it is these concrete features of a contradiction and the changes in the principal and non-principal aspects of a contradiction in the course of its development that manifest the force of the new superseding the old. The study of the various states of unevenness in contradictions, of the principal and non-principal contradictions and of the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction constitutes an essential method by which a revolutionary political party correctly determines its strategic and tactical policies both in political and in military affairs. All Communists must give it attention.

V. THE IDENTITY AND STRUGGLE OF THE ASPECTS OF A CONTRADICTION

When we understand the universality and the particularity of contradiction, we must proceed to study the problem of the identity and struggle of the aspects of a contradiction.

Identity, unity, coincidence, interpenetration, interpermeation, interdependence (or mutual dependence for existence), interconnection or mutual co-operation--all these different terms mean the same thing and refer to the following two points: first, the existence of each of the two aspects of a contradiction in the process of the development of a thing presupposes the existence of the other aspect, and both aspects coexist in a single entity; second, in given conditions, each of the two contradictory aspects transforms itself into its opposite. This is the meaning of identity.

Lenin said:

" *Dialectics is* the teaching which shows how *opposites* can be and how they happen to be (how they become) *identical*-- under what conditions they are identical, transforming themselves into one another,--why the human mind should take these opposites not as dead, rigid, but as living, conditional, mobile, transforming themselves into one another." [16]

What does this passage mean?

The contradictory aspects in every process exclude each other, struggle with each other and are in opposition to each other. Without exception, they are contained in the process of development of all things and in all human thought. A simple process contains only a single pair of opposites, while a complex process contains more. And in turn, the pairs of opposites are in contradiction to one another.

That is how all things in the objective world and all human thought are constituted and how they are set in motion.

This being so, there is an utter lack of identity or unity. How then can one speak of identity or unity?

The fact is that no contradictory aspect can exist in isolation. Without its opposite aspect, each loses the condition for its existence. Just think, can any one contradictory aspect of a thing or of a concept in the human mind exist independently? Without life, there would be no death; without death, there would be no life. Without "above", there would be no "below" without "below", there would be no "above". Without misfortune, there would be no good fortune; without good fortune, these would be no misfortune. Without facility, there would be no difficulty without difficulty, there would be no facility. Without landlords, there would be no tenant-peasants; without tenant-peasants, there would be no landlords. Without the bourgeoisie, there would be no proletariat; without the proletariat, there would be no bourgeoisie. Without imperialist oppression of nations, there would be no colonies or semi-colonies; without colonies or semi-colonies, there would be no imperialist oppression of nations. It is so with all opposites; in given conditions, on the one hand they are opposed to each other, and on the other they are interconnected, interpenetrating, interpermeating and interdependent, and this character is described as identity. In given conditions, all contradictory aspects possess the character of non-identity and hence are described as being in contradiction. But they also possess the character of identity and hence are interconnected. This is what Lenin means when he says that dialectics studies "how *opposites* can be ... *identical"*. Then h ow can they be identical? Because each is the condition for the other's existence. This is the first meaning of identity.

But is it enough to say merely that each of the contradictory aspects is the condition for the other's existence, that there is identity between them and that consequently they can coexist in a single entity? No, it is not. The matter does not end with their dependence on each other for their existence; what is more important is their transformation into each other. That is to say, in given conditions, each of the contradictory aspects within a thing transforms itself into its opposite, changes its position to that of its opposite. This is the second meaning of the identity of contradiction.

Why is there identity here, too? You see, by means of revolution the proletariat, at one time the ruled, is transformed into the ruler, while the bourgeoisie, the erstwhile ruler, is transformed into the ruled and changes its position to that originally occupied by its opposite. This has already taken place in the Soviet Union, as it will take place throughout the world. If there were no

interconnection and identity of opposites in given conditions, how could such a change take place?

The Kuomintang, which played a certain positive role at a certain stage in modern Chinese history, became a counter-revolutionary party after 1927 because of its inherent class nature and because of imperialist blandishments (these being the conditions); but it has been compelled to agree to resist Japan because of the sharpening of the contradiction between China and Japan and because of the Communist Party's policy of the united front (these being the conditions). Things in contradiction change into one another, and herein lies a definite identity.

Our agrarian revolution has been a process in which the landlord class owning the land is transformed into a class that has lost its land, while the peasants who once lost their land are transformed into small holders who have acquired land, and it will be such a process once again. In given conditions having and not having, acquiring and losing, are interconnected; there is identity of the two sides. Under socialism, private peasant ownership is transformed into the public ownership of socialist agriculture; this has already taken place in the Soviet Union, as it will take place everywhere else. There is a bridge leading from private property to public property, which in philosophy is called identity, or transformation into each other, or interpenetration.

To consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat or the dictatorship of the people is in fact to prepare the conditions for abolishing this dictatorship and advancing to the higher stage when all state systems are eliminated. To establish and build the Communist Party is in fact to prepare the conditions for the elimination of the Communist Party and all political parties. To build a revolutionary army under the leadership of the Communist Party and to carry on revolutionary war is in fact to prepare the conditions for the permanent elimination of war. These opposites are at the same time complementary.

War and peace, as everybody knows, transform themselves into each other. War is transformed into peace; for instance, the First World War was transformed into post-war peace, and the civil war in China has now stopped, giving place to internal peace. Peace is transformed into war; for instance, the Kuomintang-Communist co-operation was transformed into war in 1927, and today's situation of world peace may be transformed into a second world war. Why is this so?

Because in class society such contradictory things as war and peace have an identity in given conditions.

All contradictory things are interconnected; not only do they coexist in a single entity in given conditions, but in other given conditions, they also transform themselves into each other. This is the full meaning of the identity of opposites. This is what Lenin meant when he discussed "how they happen to be (how they become) *identical*-- under what conditions they are identical, transforming themselves into one another".

Why is it that "the human mind should take these opposites not as dead, rigid, but as living, conditional, mobile, transforming themselves into one another"? Because that is just how things are in objective reality. The fact is that the unity or identity of opposites in objective things is not dead or rigid, but is living, conditional, mobile, temporary and relative; in given conditions, every contradictory aspect transforms itself into its opposite. Reflected in man's thinking, this becomes the Marxist world outlook of materialist dialectics. It is only the reactionary ruling classes of the past and present and the metaphysicians in their service who regard opposites not as living, conditional, mobile and transforming themselves into one another, but as dead and rigid, and they propagate this fallacy everywhere to delude the masses of the people, thus seeking to perpetuate their rule. The task of Communists is to expose the fallacies of the reactionaries and metaphysicians, to propagate the dialectics inherent in things, and so accelerate the transformation of things and achieve the goal of revolution.

In speaking of the identity of opposites in given conditions, what we are referring to is real and concrete opposites and the real and concrete transformations of opposites into one another. There are innumerable transformations in mythology, for instance, Kua Fu's race with the sun in *Shan Hai Ching,* [17] Yi's shooting down of nine suns in *Huai Nan Tzu* , [18] the Monkey King's seventy-two metamorphoses in *Hsi Yu Chi,* [19] the numerous episodes of ghosts and foxes metamorphosed into human beings in the *Strange Tales of Liao Chai,* [20] etc. But these legendary transformations of opposites are not concrete changes reflecting concrete contradictions. They are naive, imaginary, subjectively conceived transformations conjured up in men's minds by innumerable real and complex transformations of opposites into one another. Marx said, "All mythology masters and dominates and shapes the forces of

nature in and through the imagination; hence it disappears as soon as man gains mastery over the forces of nature." [21] The myriads of changes in mythology (and also in nursery tales) delight people because they imaginatively picture man's conquest of the forces of nature, and the best myths possess "eternal charm", as Marx put it; but myths are not built out of the concrete contradictions existing in given conditions and therefore are not a scientific reflection of reality. That is to say, in myths or nursery tales the aspects constituting a contradiction have only an imaginary identity, not a concrete identity. The scientific reflection of the identity in real transformations is Marxist dialectics.

Why can an egg but not a stone be transformed into a chicken? Why is there identity between war and peace and none between war and a stone? Why can human beings give birth only to human beings and not to anything else? The sole reason is that the identity of opposites exists only in necessary given conditions. Without these necessary given conditions there can be no identity whatsoever.

Why is it that in Russia in 1917 the bourgeois-democratic February Revolution was directly linked with the proletarian socialist October Revolution, while in France the bourgeois revolution was not directly linked with a socialist revolution and the Paris Commune of 1871 ended in failure? Why is it, on the other hand, that the nomadic system of Mongolia and Central Asia has been directly linked with socialism? Why is it that the Chinese revolution can avoid a capitalist future and be directly linked with socialism without taking the old historical road of the Western countries, without passing through a period of bourgeois dictatorship? The sole reason is the concrete conditions of the time. When certain necessary conditions are present, certain contradictions arise in the process of development of things and, moreover, the opposites contained in them are interdependent and become transformed into one another; otherwise none of this would be possible.

Such is the problem of identity. What then is struggle? And what is the relation between identity and struggle?

Lenin said:

“The unity (coincidence, identity, equal action) of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory, relative. The struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is

absolute, just as development and motion are absolute." [22]

What does this passage mean?

All processes have a beginning and an end, all processes transform themselves into their opposites. The constancy of all processes is relative, but the mutability manifested in the transformation of one process into another is absolute.

There are two states of motion in all things, that of relative rest and that of conspicuous change. Both are caused by the struggle between the two contradictory elements contained in a thing. When the thing is in the first state of motion, it is undergoing only quantitative and not qualitative change and consequently presents the outward appearance of being at rest. When the thing is in the second state of motion, the quantitative change of the first state has already reached a culminating point and gives rise to the dissolution of the thing as an entity and thereupon a qualitative change ensues, hence the appearance of a conspicuous change. Such unity, solidarity, combination, harmony, balance, stalemate, deadlock, rest, constancy, equilibrium, solidity, attraction, etc., as we see in daily life, are all the appearances of things in the state of quantitative change. On the other hand, the dissolution of unity, that is, the destruction of this solidarity, combination, harmony, balance, stalemate, deadlock, rest, constancy, equilibrium, solidity and attraction, and the change of each into its opposite are all the appearances of things in the state of qualitative change, the transformation of one process into another. Things are constantly transforming themselves from the first into the second state of motion; the struggle of opposites goes on in both states but the contradiction is resolved through the second state. That is why we say that the unity of opposites is conditional, temporary and relative, while the struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute.

When we said above that two opposite things can coexist in a single entity and can transform themselves into each other because there is identity between them, we were speaking of conditionality, that is to say, in given conditions two contradictory things can be united and can transform themselves into each other, but in the absence of these conditions, they cannot constitute a contradiction, cannot coexist in the same entity and cannot transform themselves into one another. It is because the identity of opposites obtains only in given conditions that we have said identity is conditional and relative. We may add that the struggle between opposites permeates a process from beginning to end and

makes one process transform itself into another, that it is ubiquitous, and that struggle is therefore unconditional and absolute.

The combination of conditional, relative identity and unconditional, absolute struggle constitutes the movement of opposites in all things.

We Chinese often say, "Things that oppose each other also complement each other." [23] That is, things opposed to each other have identity. This saying is dialectical and contrary to metaphysics. "Oppose each other" refers to the mutual exclusion or the struggle of two contradictory aspects. "Complement each other" means that in given conditions the two contradictory aspects unite and achieve identity. Yet struggle is inherent in identity and without struggle there can be no identity.

In identity there is struggle, in particularity there is universality, and in individuality there is generality. To quote Lenin, ". . . there is an absolute in the relative." [24]

VI. THE PLACE OF ANTAGONISM IN CONTRADICTION

The question of the struggle of opposites includes the question of what is antagonism. Our answer is that antagonism is one form, but not the only form, of the struggle of opposites.

In human history, antagonism between classes exists as a particular manifestation of the struggle of opposites. Consider the contradiction between the exploiting and the exploited classes. Such contradictory classes coexist for a long time in the same society, be it slave society, feudal society or capitalist society, and they struggle with each other; but it is not until the contradiction between the two classes develops to a certain stage that it assumes the form of open antagonism and develops into revolution. The same holds for the transformation of peace into war in class society.

Before it explodes, a bomb is a single entity in which opposites coexist in given conditions. The explosion takes place only when a new condition, ignition, is present. An analogous situation arises in all those natural phenomena which finally assume the form of open conflict to resolve old contradictions and produce new things.

It is highly important to grasp this fact. It enables us to understand that revolutions and revolutionary wars are inevitable in class society and that without them, it is impossible to accomplish any leap in social development and to overthrow the reactionary ruling classes and therefore impossible for the people to win political power. Communists must expose the deceitful propaganda of the reactionaries, such as the assertion that social revolution is unnecessary and impossible. They must firmly uphold the Marxist-Leninist theory of social revolution and enable the people to understand that social revolution is not only entirely necessary but also entirely practicable, and that the whole history of mankind and the triumph of the Soviet Union have confirmed this scientific truth.

However, we must make a concrete study of the circumstances of each specific struggle of opposites and should not arbitrarily apply the formula discussed above to everything. Contradiction and struggle are universal and absolute, but the methods of resolving contradictions, that is, the forms of struggle, differ according to the differences in the nature of the contradictions. Some contradictions are characterized by open antagonism, others are not. In accordance with the concrete development of things, some contradictions which were originally non-antagonistic develop into antagonistic ones, while others which were originally antagonistic develop into non-antagonistic ones.

As already mentioned, so long as classes exist, contradictions between correct and incorrect ideas in the Communist Party are reflections within the Party of class contradictions. At first, with regard to certain issues, such contradictions may not manifest themselves as antagonistic. But with the development of the class struggle, they may grow and become antagonistic. The history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union shows us that the contradictions between the correct thinking of Lenin and Stalin and the fallacious thinking of Trotsky, Bukharin and others did not at first manifest themselves in an antagonistic form, but that later they did develop into antagonism. There are similar cases in the

history of the Chinese Communist Party. At first the contradictions between the correct thinking of many of our Party comrades and the fallacious thinking of Chen Tu-hsiu, Chang Kuo-tao and others also did not manifest themselves in an antagonistic form, but later they did develop into antagonism. At present the contradiction between correct and incorrect thinking in our Party does not manifest itself in an antagonistic form, and if comrades who have committed mistakes can correct them, it will not develop into antagonism. Therefore, the Party must on the one hand wage a serious struggle against erroneous thinking, and on the other give the comrades who have committed errors ample opportunity to wake up. This being the case, excessive struggle is obviously inappropriate. But if the people who have committed errors persist in them and aggravate them, there is the possibility that this contradiction will develop into antagonism.

Economically, the contradiction between town and country is an extremely antagonistic one both in capitalist society, where under the rule of the bourgeoisie the towns ruthlessly plunder the countryside, and in the Kuomintang areas in China, where under the rule of foreign imperialism and the Chinese big comprador bourgeoisie the towns most rapaciously plunder the countryside. But in a socialist country and in our revolutionary base areas, this antagonistic contradiction has changed into one that is non-antagonistic; and when communist society is reached it will be abolished.

Lenin said, "Antagonism and contradiction are not at all one and the same. Under socialism, the first will disappear, the second will remain." [25] That is to say, antagonism is one form, but not the only form, of the struggle of opposites; the formula of antagonism cannot be arbitrarily applied everywhere.

VII. CONCLUSION

We may now say a few words to sum up. The law of contradiction in things, that is, the law of the unity of opposites, is the fundamental law of nature and of society and therefore also the fundamental law of thought. It stands opposed to the metaphysical world outlook. It represents a great revolution in the history of

human knowledge. According to dialectical materialism, contradiction is present in all processes of objectively existing things and of subjective thought and permeates all these processes from beginning to end; this is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction. Each contradiction and each of its aspects have their respective characteristics; this is the particularity and relativity of contradiction. In given conditions, opposites possess identity, and consequently can coexist in a single entity and can transform themselves into each other; this again is the particularity and relativity of contradiction. But the struggle of opposites is ceaseless, it goes on both when the opposites are coexisting and when they are transforming themselves into each other, and becomes especially conspicuous when they are transforming themselves into one another; this again is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction. In studying the particularity and relativity of contradiction, we must give attention to the distinction between the principal contradiction and the non-principal contradictions and to the distinction between the principal aspect and the non-principal aspect of a contradiction; in studying the universality of contradiction and the struggle of opposites in contradiction, we must give attention to the distinction between the different forms of struggle. Otherwise we shall make mistakes. If, through study, we achieve a real understanding of the essentials explained above, we shall be able to demolish dogmatist ideas which are contrary to the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and detrimental to our revolutionary cause, and our comrades with practical experience will be able to organize their experience into principles and avoid repeating empiricist errors. These are a few simple conclusions from our study of the law of contradiction.

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[1] V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy" Collected Works,* Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 249.

[2] In his essay "On the Question of Dialectics", Lenin said, "The splitting in two of a single whole and the cognition of its contradictory parts (see the quotation from Philo on Heraclitus at the beginning of Section 3 'On Cognition' in Lassalle's book on Heraclitus) is the *essence* (one of the 'essentials', one of the principal, if not the principal, characteristics or features) of dialectics." *(Collected Works,* Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 357.) In his "Conspectus of Hegel's *The Science of Logic",* he said, "In brief, dialectics can be defined as the doctrine of the unity of opposites. This grasps the kernel of dialectics, but it requires explanations and development." (Ibid., p. 215.)

[3] V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", *Collected Works, Russ.* ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 358.

[4] A saying of Tung Chung-shu (179-104 B.C.), a well-known exponent of Confucianism in the Han Dynasty.

[5] Frederick Engels, "Dialectics. Quantity and Quality", *Anti-Duhring,* Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1959, p. 166.

[6] V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", *Collected Works,* Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, pp. 357-58.

[7] Frederick Engels, *op. cit.* , pp. 166-67.

[8] V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", *Collected Works,* Russ . ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 357.

[9] *Ibid* ., pp. 358-59.

[10] See "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War", Note 10, p. 251 of this volume.

[11] See *ibid .,* Note , p. 249 of this volume.

[12] Wei Cheng (A.D. 580-643) was a statesman and historian of the Tang Dynasty.

[13] *Shui Hu Chuan* (*Heroes of the Marshes*), a famous 14th century Chinese novel, describes a peasant war towards the end of the Northern Sung Dynasty. Chu Village was in the vicinity of Liangshanpo , where Sung Chiang, leader of the peasant uprising and hero of the novel, established his base. Chu Chao-feng, the head of this village, was a despotic landlord.

[14] V. I. Lenin, "Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Present Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin", *Selected Works,* Eng. ed., International Publishers, New York, 1943, Vol. IX, p. 66.

[15] V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works,* Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1961, Vol. V, p. 369.

[16] V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's *The Science of Logic", Collected Works,* Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, pp. 97-98.

[17] *Shan Hai Chug* (*Book of Mountains and Seas*) was written in the era of the Warring States (403-221 B.C.). In one of its fables Kua Fu, a superman, pursued and overtook the sun. But he died of thirst, whereupon his staff was transformed into the forest of Teng.

[18] Yi is one of the legendary heroes of ancient China, famous for his archery. According to a legend in *Huai Nan Tzu,* compiled in the 2nd century B.C., there were ten suns in the sky in the days of Emperor Yao. To put an end to the damage to vegetation caused by these scorching suns, Emperor Yao ordered Yi to shoot them down. In another legend recorded by Wang Yi (2nd century A.D.), the archer is said to have shot down nine of the ten suns.

[19] Hsi Yu Chi (Pilgrimage to the West) is a 16th century novel, the hero of which is the monkey god Sun Wu-kung. He could miraculously change at will into seventy-two different shapes, such as a bird, a tree and a stone.

[20] The *Strange Tales of Liao Chai,* written by Pu Sung-ling in the 17th century, is a well-known collection of 431 tales, mostly about ghosts and fox spirits.

[21] Karl Marx, "Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy", *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy,* Eng. ed., Chicago, 1904, pp. 310-11.

[22] V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", *Collected Works,* Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 358.

[23] The saying "Things that oppose each other also complement each other" first appeared in the *History of the Earlier Han Dynasty* by Pan Ku, a celebrated historian in the 1st century A.D. It has long been a popular saying.

[24] V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", Collected Works, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 358.

[25] V. I. Lenin, "Remarks on N. I. Bukharin's *Economics of the Transitional Period" Selected Works,* Russ. ed., Moscow-Leningrad, 1931, Vol. XI, p. 357.

What Is To Be Done?

by V. I. Lenin, 1902

Preface

According to the author's original plan, the present pamphlet was to have been devoted to a detailed development of the ideas expressed in the article "Where To Begin", (*Iskra* , No. 4, May 1901). We must first apologize to the reader for the delay in fulfilling the promise made in that article (and repeated in response to many private inquiries and letters). One of the reasons for this delay was the attempt, undertaken in June of the past year (1901), to unite all the Social-Democratic organizations abroad. It was natural to wait for the results of this attempt, for, had the effort proved successful, it would perhaps have been necessary to expound *Iskra's* conceptions of organization from a somewhat different approach; in any case, such a success promised to put an end very quickly to the existence of the two trends in the Russian Social-Democratic movement. As the reader knows, the attempt failed, and as we propose to show, was bound to fail after the new swing of *Rabocheye Dyelo* , in its issue No. 10, towards Economism. It was found to be absolutely essential to begin a determined struggle against this trend, diffuse and ill-defined, but for that reason the more persistent, the more capable of reasserting itself in diverse forms. Accordingly, the original plan of the pamphlet was altered and considerably enlarged.

Its main theme was to have been the three questions raised in the article "Where To Begin" – the character and main content of our political agitation; our organizational tasks; and the plan for building, simultaneously and from various sides, a militant, all-Russia organization. These questions have long engaged the mind of the author, who tried to raise them in *Rabochaya Gazeta* [1]. during one of the unsuccessful attempts to revive

that paper (see Chapter V). But the original plan to confine the pamphlet to an analysis of only these three questions and to set forth our views as far as possible in a positive form, without, or almost without, entering into polemics, proved wholly impracticable, for two reasons. On the one hand, Economism proved to be much more tenacious than we had supposed (we employ the term Economism in the broad sense, as explained in *Iskra* , No. 12 (December 1901), in the article entitled "A Talk With Defenders of Economism", which was a synopsis, so to speak, of the present pamphlet). It became clear beyond doubt that the differences regarding the solution of the three questions mentioned were explainable to a far greater degree by the basic antithesis between the two trends in the Russian Social-Democratic movement than by differences over details. On the other hand, the perplexity of the Economists over the practical application of our views in *Iskra* clearly revealed that we often speak literally in different tongues and therefore *cannot* arrive at an understanding without beginning *ab ovo* , and that an attempt must be made, in the simplest possible style, illustrated by numerous and concrete examples, *systematically to "clarify" all* our basic points of difference with *all* the Economists. I resolved to make such an attempt at "clarification", fully realizing that it would greatly increase the size of the pamphlet and delay its publication; I saw *no other way* of meeting my pledge I had made in the article "Where To Begin". Thus, to the apologies for the delay, I must add others for the serious literary shortcomings of the pamphlet. I had to work *in great haste* , with frequent interruptions by a variety of other tasks.

The examination of the above three questions still constitutes the main theme of this pamphlet, but I found it necessary to begin with two questions of a more general nature – why such an "innocent" and "natural" slogan as "freedom of criticism" should be for us a veritable war-cry, and why we cannot come to an understanding even on the fundamental question of the role of Social-Democrats in relation to the spontaneous mass movement. Further, the exposition of our views on the character and substance of political agitation developed into an explanation of the difference between trade-unionist politics and Social-Democratic politics, while the exposition of our views on organizational tasks developed into an explanation of the difference between the amateurish methods which satisfy the Economists, and the organization of revolutionaries which we hold to be indispensable.

Further, I advance the "plan" for an all-Russia political newspaper with all the more insistence because the objections raised against it are untenable, and because no real answer has been given to the question I raised in the article "Where To Begin" as to how we can set to work from all sides simultaneously to create the organization we need. Finally, in the concluding part, I hope to show that we did all we could to prevent a decisive break with the Economists, a break which nevertheless proved inevitable; that *Rabocheye Dyelo* acquired a special significance, a "historical" significance, if you will, because it expressed fully and strikingly, not consistent Economism, but the confusion and vacillation which constitute the distinguishing feature of *an entire period* in the history of Russian Social-Democracy; and that therefore the polemic with *Rabocheye Dyelo* , which may upon first view seem excessively detailed, also acquires significance, for we can make no progress until we have completely put an end to this period.

N. Lenin

February 1902

Chapter 1: Dogmatism and "Freedom of Criticism"

A. What Does "Freedom of Criticism" Mean?

"Freedom of criticism" is undoubtedly the most fashionable slogan at the present time, and the one most frequently employed in the controversies between socialists and democrats in all countries. At first sight, nothing would appear to be more strange than the solemn appeals to freedom of criticism made by one of the parties to the dispute. Have voices been raised in the advanced parties against the constitutional law of the majority of European countries which guarantees freedom to science and scientific investigation? "Something must be wrong here," will be the comment of the onlooker who has heard this fashionable slogan repeated at every turn but has not yet penetrated the essence of the disagreement among the disputants; evidently this slogan is one of the conventional phrases which, like nicknames, become legitimized by use, and become almost generic terms."

In fact, it is no secret for anyone that two trends have taken form in present-day international [2] Social-Democracy. The conflict between these trends now flares up in a bright flame and now dies down and smolders under the ashes of imposing "truce resolutions". The essence of the "new" trend, which adopts a "critical" attitude towards "obsolete dogmatic" Marxism, has been clearly enough *presented* by Bernstein and *demonstrated* by Millerand.

Social-Democracy must change from a party of social revolution into a democratic party of social reforms. Bernstein has surrounded this political demand with a whole battery of well-attuned "new" arguments and reasonings. Denied was the possibility of putting socialism on a scientific basis and of demonstrating its necessity and inevitability from the point of view of the materialist conception of history. Denied was the fact of growing impoverishment, the process of proletarianization, and the intensification of capitalist contradictions; the very concept, " *ultimate aim*

", was declared to be unsound, and the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat was completely rejected. Denied was the antithesis in principle between liberalism and socialism. Denied was *the theory of the class struggle,* on the alleged grounds that it could not be applied to a strictly democratic society governed according to the will of the majority, etc.

Thus, the demand for a decisive turn from revolutionary Social-Democracy to bourgeois social-reformism was accompanied by a no less decisive turn towards bourgeois criticism of all the fundamental ideas of Marxism. In view of the fact that this criticism of Marxism has long been directed from the political platform, from university chairs, in numerous pamphlets and in a series of learned treatises, in view of the fact that the entire younger generation of the educated classes has been systematically reared for decades on this criticism, it is not surprising that the "new critical" trend in Social-Democracy should spring up, all complete, like Minerva from the head of Jove. The content of this new trend did not have to grow and take shape, it was transferred bodily from bourgeois to socialist literature.

To proceed. If Bernstein's theoretical criticism and political yearnings were still unclear to anyone, the French took the trouble strikingly to demonstrate the "new method". In this instance, too, France has justified its old reputation of being "the land where, more than anywhere else, the historical class struggles were each time fought out to a decision..." (Engels, Introduction to Marx's *Der 18 Brumaire*). [3] The French socialists have begun, not to theorize, but to act. The democratically more highly developed political conditions in France have permitted them to put "Bernsteinism into practice" immediately, with all its consequences. Millerand has furnished an excellent example of practical Bernsteinism; not without reason did Bernstein and Vollmar rush so zealously to defend and laud him. Indeed, if Social-Democracy, in essence, is merely a party of reform and must be bold enough to admit this openly, then not only does a socialist have the right to join a bourgeois cabinet, but he must always strive to do so. If democracy, in essence, means the abolition of class domination, then why should not a socialist minister charm the whole bourgeois world by orations on class collaboration? Why should he not remain in the cabinet even after the shooting-down of workers by gendarmes has exposed, for the

hundredth and thousandth time, the real nature of the democratic collaboration of classes? Why should he not personally take part in greeting the tsar, for whom the French socialists now have no other name than hero of the gallows, knout, and exile (*knouteur , pendeur et deportateur)* ? And the reward for this utter humiliation and self-degradation of socialism in the face of the whole world, for the corruption of the socialist consciousness of the working masses – the only basis that can guarantee our victory – the reward for this is pompous *projects* for miserable reforms, so miserable in fact that much more has been obtained from bourgeois governments!

He who does not deliberately close his eyes cannot fail to see that the new "critical" trend in socialism is nothing more nor less than a new variety of *opportunism* . And if we judge people, not by the glittering uniforms they wear or by the high sounding appellations they give themselves, but by their actions and by what they actually advocate, it will be clear that "freedom of criticism" means' freedom for an opportunist trend in Social-Democracy, freedom to convert Social-Democracy into a democratic party of reform, freedom to introduce bourgeois ideas and bourgeois elements into socialism.

"Freedom" is a grand word, but under the banner of freedom for industry the most predatory wars were waged, under the banner of freedom of labor, the working people were robbed. The modern use of the term "freedom of criticism" contains the same inherent falsehood. Those who are really convinced that they have made progress in science would not demand freedom for the new views to continue side by side with the old, but the substitution of the new views for the old. The cry heard today, "Long live freedom of criticism", is too strongly reminiscent of the fable of the empty barrel.

We are marching in a compact group along a precipitous and difficult path, firmly holding each other by the hand. We are surrounded on all sides by enemies, and we have to advance almost constantly under their fire. We have combined, by a freely adopted decision, for the purpose of fighting the enemy, and not of retreating into the neighboring marsh, the inhabitants of which, from the very outset, have reproached us with having separated

ourselves into an exclusive group and with having chosen the path of struggle instead of the path of conciliation. And now some among us begin to cry out: Let us go into the marsh! And when we begin to shame them, they retort: What backward people you are! Are you not ashamed to deny us the liberty to invite you to take a better road! Oh, yes, gentlemen! You are free not only to invite us, but to go yourselves wherever you will, even into the marsh. In fact, we think that the marsh is your proper place, and we are prepared to render you every assistance to get there. Only let go of our hands, don't clutch at us and don't besmirch the grand word freedom, for we too are "free" to go where we please, free to fight not only against the marsh, but also against those who are turning towards the marsh!

B. The New Advocates of "Freedom of Criticism"

Now, this slogan ("freedom of criticism") has in recent times been solemnly advanced by *Rabocheye Dyelo* (No. 10), organ of the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad, not as a theoretical postulate, but as a political demand, as a reply to the question, "Is it possible to unite the Social-Democratic organizations operating abroad?": "For a durable unity, there must be freedom of criticism" (p. 36).

From this statement two definite conclusions follow: (1) that *Rabocheye Dyelo* has taken under its wing the opportunist trend in international Social-Democracy in general, and (2) that *Rabocheye Dyelo* demands freedom for opportunism in Russian Social-Democracy. Let us examine these conclusions.

Rabocheye Dyelo is "particularly" displeased with the "inclination of *Iskra* and *Zarya* to predict a rupture between the *Mountain* and the *Gironde* in international Social-Democracy". [4]

"Generally speaking," writes B. Krichevsky, editor of *Rabocheye Dyelo* , "this talk of the *Mountain* and the *Gironde* heard in the ranks of Social-Democracy represents a shallow historical analogy, a strange thing to come from the pen of a Marxist. The Mountain and the Gironde did not represent different temperaments-, or intellectual trends, as the historians of social thought may think, but different classes or strata – the middle bourgeoisie,

on the one hand, and the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat, on the other. In the modern socialist movement, however, there is no conflict of class interests; the socialist movement in its entirety, in *all* of its diverse forms (Krichevsky's italics), including the most pronounced Bernsteinians, stands on the basis of the class interests of the proletariat and its class struggle for political and economic emancipation" (pp. 32-33).

A bold assertion! Has not Krichevsky heard of the fact, long ago noted, that it is precisely the extensive participation of an "academic" *stratum* in the socialist movement in recent years that has promoted such a rapid spread of Bernsteinism? And what is most important – on what does our author found his opinion that even "the most pronounced Bernsteinians" stand on the basis of the class struggle for the political and economic emancipation of the proletariat? No one knows. This determined defense of the most pronounced Bernsteinians is not supported by any argument or reasoning whatsoever. Apparently, the author believes that if he repeats what the most pronounced Bernsteinians say about themselves his assertion requires no proof. But can anything more "shallow" be imagined than this judgment of an entire trend based on nothing more than what the representatives of that trend say about themselves? Can anything more shallow be imagined than the subsequent "homily" on the two different and even diametrically opposite types, or paths, of party development? (*Rabocheye Dyelo* , pp. 34-35.) The German Social-Democrats, in other words, recognize complete freedom of criticism, but the French do not, and it is precisely their example that demonstrates the "bane of intolerance".

To this we can only say that the very example B. Krichevsky affords us attests to the fact that the name Marxists is at times assumed by people who conceive history literally in the " Ilovaisky manner". [5] To explain the unity of the German Socialist Party and the disunity of the French Socialist Party, there is no need whatever to go into the special features in the history of these countries, to contrast the conditions of military semi absolutism in the one with republican parliamentarism in the other, to analyze the effects of the Paris Commune and the effects of the Exceptional Law Against the Socialists, to compare the economic life and economic development of the two countries, or to recall that "the unexampled growth of German Social-

Democracy" was accompanied by a strenuous struggle, unique in the history of socialism, not only against erroneous theories (Mühlberger, Dühring, [6] the *Katheder* -Socialists [7]), but also against erroneous tactics (Lassalle), etc., etc. All that is superfluous! The French quarrel among themselves because they are intolerant; the Germans are united because they are good boys.

And observe, this piece of matchless profundity is designed to "refute" the fact that puts to rout the defense of the Bernsteinians. The question whether or not the Bernsteinians *stand* on the basis of the class struggle of the proletariat is one that can be completely and irrevocably answered only by historical experience. Consequently, the example of France holds greatest significance in this respect, because France is the only country in which the Bernsteinians attempted *to stand* independently, on their own feet, with the warm approval of their German colleagues (and partly also of the Russian opportunists; cf. *Rabocheye Dyelo* , No. 2-3, pp. 83-84). The reference to the "intolerance" of the French, apart from its "historical" significance (in the Nozdryov [8] sense), turns out to be merely an attempt to –hush up very unpleasant facts with angry invectives.

Nor are we inclined to make a present of the Germans to Krichevsky and the numerous other champions of "freedom of criticism". If the "most pronounced Bernsteinians" are still tolerated in the ranks of the German party, it is only to the extent that they *submit* to the Hanover resolution, [9] which emphatically rejected Bernstein's " amendments" , and to the Lubeck resolution, which (notwithstanding the diplomatic terms in which it is couched) contains a direct warning to Bernstein. It is debatable, from the standpoint of the interests of the German party, whether diplomacy was appropriate and whether, in this case, a bad peace is better than a good quarrel; in short, opinions may differ as to the expediency of any one of the *methods* employed to reject Bernsteinism, but that the German party *did reject* Bernsteinism on two occasions, is a fact no one can fail to see. Therefore, to think that the German example confirms the thesis that "the most pronounced Bernsteinians stand on the basis of the class struggle of the proletariat, for political and economic emancipation", means to fail completely to understand what is going on under our very eyes. [10]

Nor is that all. As we have seen, *Rabocheye Dyelo* demands "freedom of criticism" and defends Bernsteinism before *Russian* Social-Democracy. Apparently it convinced itself that we were unfair to our "Critics" and Bernsteinians. But to which ones? who? where? when? What did the unfairness represent? About this, not a word. *Rabocheye Dyelo* does not name a single Russian Critic or Bernsteinian! We are left with but one of two possible suppositions. *Either* the unfairly treated party is none other than *Rabocheye Dyelo* itself (this is confirmed by the fact that in the two articles in No. 10 reference is made only to the wrongs suffered by *Rabocheye Dyelo* at the hands of *Zarya* and *Iskra*). If that is the case, how is the strange fact to be explained that *Rabocheye Dyelo* , which always vehemently dissociated itself from all solidarity with Bernsteinism, could not defend itself without putting in a word in defense of the "most pronounced Bernsteinians" and of freedom of criticism? Or some third persons have been treated unfairly. if this is the case, then what reasons may there be for not naming them?

We see, therefore, that *Rabocheye Dyelo* is continuing to play the game of hide-and-seek it has played (as we shall show below) ever since its founding. And let us note further this *first* practical application of the vaunted "freedom of criticism". In actual fact, not only was it forthwith reduced to abstention from all criticism, but also to abstention from expressing independent views altogether. The very *Rabocheye Dyelo* , which avoids mentioning Russian Bernsteinism as if it were a shameful disease (to use Starover's [11] apt expression), proposes, for the treatment of this disease, to copy word for word the latest German prescription for the German variety of the malady! Instead of freedom of criticism slavish (worse: apish) imitation! The very same social and political content of modern international opportunism reveals itself in a variety of ways according to national peculiarities. In one country the opportunists have long ago come out under a separate flag; in another, they have ignored theory and in fact pursued the policy of the Radicals-Socialists; in a third, some members of the revolutionary party have deserted to the camp of opportunism and strive to achieve their aims, not in open struggle for principles and for new tactics, but by gradual, imperceptible, and, if one may so put it, unpunishable corruption of their party; in a fourth country,

similar deserters employ the same methods in the gloom of political slavery, and with a completely original combination of "legal" and "illegal" activity, etc. To talk of freedom of criticism and of Bernsteinism as a condition for uniting the *Russian* Social Democrats and not to explain how *Russian* Bernsteinism has manifested itself and what particular fruits it has borne, amounts to talking with the aim of saying nothing.

Let us ourselves try, if only in a few words, to say what *Rabocheye Dyelo* did not want to say (or which was, perhaps, beyond its comprehension).

C. Criticism in Russia

The chief distinguishing feature of Russia in regard to the point we are examining is that *the very beginning* of the spontaneous working-class movement, on the one hand, and of the turn of progressive public opinion towards Marxism, on the other, was marked by the combination of manifestly heterogeneous elements under a common flag to fight the common enemy (the obsolete social and political world outlook). We refer to the heyday of "legal Marxism". Speaking generally, this was an altogether curious phenomenon that no one in the eighties or the beginning of the nineties would have believed possible. In a country ruled by an autocracy, with a completely enslaved press, in a period of desperate political reaction in which even the tiniest outgrowth of political discontent and protest is persecuted, the theory of revolutionary Marxism suddenly forces its way into the *censored* literature and, though expounded in Aesopian language, is understood by all the "interested". The government had accustomed itself to regarding only the theory of the (revolutionary) Narodnaya Volya as dangerous, without, as is usual, observing its internal evolution, and rejoicing at any criticism leveled against it. Quite a considerable time elapsed (by our Russian standards) before the government realized what had happened and the unwieldy army of censors and gendarmes discovered the new enemy and flung itself upon him. Meanwhile, Marxist books were published one after another, Marxist journals and newspapers were founded, nearly everyone became a Marxist, Marxists were flattered, Marxists were courted, and the book publishers rejoiced at the extraordinary, ready sale of Marxist literature. It was quite natural, therefore, that among the Marxian neophytes who were caught up

in this atmosphere, there should be more than one "author who got a swelled head…" [12]

We can now speak calmly of this period as of an event of the past. It is no secret that the brief period in which Marxism blossomed on the surface of our literature was called forth by an alliance between people of extreme and of very moderate views. In point of fact, the latter were bourgeois democrats; this conclusion (so markedly confirmed by their subsequent "critical" development) suggested itself to some even when the "alliance" was still intact. [13]

That being the case, are not the revolutionary Social-Democrats who entered into the alliance with the future "Critics" mainly responsible for the subsequent "confusion"? This question, together with a reply in the affirmative, is sometimes heard from people with too rigid a view. But such people are entirely in the wrong. Only those who are not sure of themselves can fear to enter into temporary alliances even with unreliable people; not a single political party could exist without such alliances. The combination with the legal Marxists was in its way the first really political alliance entered into by Russian Social -Democrats. Thanks to this alliance, an astonishingly rapid victory was obtained over Narodism, and Marxist ideas (even though in a vulgarized form) became very widespread. Moreover, the alliance was not concluded altogether without "conditions". Evidence of this is the burning by the censor, in 1895, of the Marxist collection *Material on the Question of the Economic Development of Russia* . [14] If the literary agreement with the legal Marxists can be compared with a political alliance, then that book can be compared with a political treaty.

The rupture, of course, did not occur because the "allies" proved to be bourgeois democrats. On the contrary, the representatives of the latter trend are natural and desirable allies of Social-Democracy insofar as its democratic tasks, brought to the fore by the prevailing situation in Russia, are concerned. But an essential condition for such an alliance must be the full opportunity for the socialists to reveal to the working class that its interests are diametrically opposed to the interests of the bourgeoisie. However, the Bernsteinian and "critical" trend, to which the majority of the

legal Marxists turned, deprived the socialists of this opportunity and demoralized the socialist consciousness by vulgarizing Marxism, by advocating the theory of the blunting of social contradictions, by declaring the idea of the social revolution and of the dictatorship of the proletariat to be absurd, by reducing the working-class movement and the class struggle to narrow trade-unionism and to a "realistic" struggle for petty, gradual reforms. This was synonymous with bourgeois democracy's denial of socialism's right to independence and, consequently, of its right to existence; in practice it meant a striving to convert the nascent working-class movement into an appendage of the liberals.

Naturally, under such circumstances the rupture was necessary. But the "peculiar" feature of Russia manifested itself in the fact that this rupture simply meant the elimination of the Social-Democrats from the most accessible and widespread "legal" literature. The "ex-Marxists", who took up the flag of "criticism" and who obtained almost a monopoly to "demolish Marxism, entrenched themselves in this literature. Catchwords like "Against orthodoxy" and "Long live freedom of criticism" (now repeated by *Rabocheye Dyelo*) forthwith became the vogue, and the fact that neither the censor nor the gendarmes could resist this vogue is apparent from the publication of *three* Russian editions of the work of the celebrated Bernstein (celebrated in the Herostratean sense) and from the fact that the works of Bernstein, Mr. Prokopovich, and others were recommended by Zubatov (*Iskra* , No. 10). A task now devolved upon the Social Democrats that was difficult in itself and was made incredibly more difficult by purely external obstacles – the task of combating the new trend. This trend did not confine itself to the sphere of literature. The turn towards "criticism" was accompanied by an infatuation for Economism among Social-Democratic practical workers.

The manner in which the connection between, and interdependence of, legal criticism and illegal Economism arose and grew is in itself an interesting subject, one that could serve as the theme of a special article. We need only note here that this connection undoubtedly existed. The notoriety deservedly acquired by the *Credo* was due precisely to the frankness with which it formulated this connection and blurted out the fundamental

political tendency of Economism – let the workers carry on the economic struggle (it would be more correct to say the trade unionist struggle, because the latter also embraces specifically working class politics) and let the Marxist intelligentsia merge with the liberals for the political "struggle." Thus, trade-unionist work "among the people" meant fulfilling the first part of this task, while legal criticism meant fulfilling the second. This statement was such an excellent weapon against Economism that, had there been no *Credo* , it would have been worth inventing one.

The Credo was not invented, but it was published without the consent and perhaps even against the will of its authors. At all events, the present writer, who took part in dragging this new "programme" into the light of day, [15] has heard complaints and reproaches to the effect that copies of the resume of the speakers' views were distributed, dubbed the *Credo* , and even published in the press together with the protest! We refer to this episode because it reveals a very peculiar feature of our Economism – fear of publicity. This is a feature of Economism generally, and not of the authors of the *Credo* alone. It was revealed by that most outspoken and honest advocate of Economism, *Rabochaya Mysl* , and by *Rabocheye Dyelo* (which was indignant over the publication of "Economist" documents in the Vademecum [16]), as well as by the Kiev Committee, which two years ago refused to permit the publication of its *profession de foi* , [17] together with a repudiation of it, [18] and by many other individual representatives of Economism.

This fear of criticism displayed by the advocates of freedom of criticism cannot be attributed solely to craftiness (although, on occasion, no doubt craftiness is brought into play: it would be improvident to expose the young and as yet frail shoots of the new trend. to attacks by opponents). No, the majority of the Economists look with sincere resentment (as by the very nature of Economism they must) upon all theoretical controversies, factional disagreements, broad political questions, plans for organizing revolutionaries, etc. "Leave all that to the people abroad!" said a fairly consistent Economist to me one day, thereby expressing a very widespread (and again purely trade-unionist) view; our concern is the working-class movement, the workers, organizations here, in our localities; all the rest is

merely the invention of doctrinaires, “the overrating of ideology”, as the authors of the letter, published in *Iskra* , No. 12, expressed it, in unison with *Rabocheye Dyelo* , No. 10.

The question now arises: such being the peculiar features of Russian “criticism” and Russian Bernsteinism, what should have been the task of those who sought to oppose opportunism in deeds and not merely in words? First, they should have made efforts to resume the theoretical work that had barely begun in the period of legal Marxism and that fell anew on the shoulders of the comrades working underground. Without such work the successful growth of the movement was impossible. Secondly, they should have actively combated the legal “criticism” that was perverting people’s minds on a considerable scale. Thirdly, they should have actively opposed confusion and vacillation in the practical movement, exposing and repudiating every conscious or unconscious attempt to degrade our programme and our tactics.

That *Rabocheye Dyelo* did none of these things is well known; we shall have occasion below to deal with this well-known fact in detail and from various aspects. At the moment, however, we desire merely to show the glaring contradiction that exists between the demand for “freedom of criticism” and the specific features of our native criticism and Russian Economism. It suffices but to glance at the text of the resolution in which the Union of Russian Social Democrats Abroad endorsed the point of view of *Rabocheye Dyelo* .

“In the interests of the further ideological development of Social-Democracy, we recognize the freedom of criticism of Social-Democratic theory in Party literature to be absolutely necessary insofar as the criticism does not run counter to the class and revolutionary character of this theory” (*Two Conferences* , p. 10).

And the motivation? The resolution “in its first part coincides with the resolution of the Lubeck Party Congress on Bernstein”. … In the simplicity of their souls the “Unionists” failed to observe what a *testimonium paupertatis* (attestation of poverty) they betray with this copying. … “But

... in its second part, it restricts freedom of criticism much more than did the Lubeck Party Congress."

The resolution of the Union Abroad, then, is directed against the Russian Bernsteinians? If it is not, then the reference to Lubeck would be utterly absurd. But it is not true to say that it "restricts freedom of criticism". In adopting their Hanover resolution, the Germans, point by point, rejected *precisely* the amendments proposed by Bernstein, while in their Lubeck resolution they cautioned *Bernstein personally* , by naming him. Our "free" imitators, however, make *not a single allusion* to a *single* manifestation of specifically Russian "criticism" and Russian Economism. In view of this omission, the bare reference to the class and revolutionary character of the theory leaves far wider scope for misinterpretation, particularly when the Union Abroad refuses to identify "so-called Economism" with opportunism (*Two Conferences* , p. 8, Paragraph 1). But all this, in passing. The main thing to note is that the positions of the opportunists in relation to the revolutionary Social-Democrats in Russia are diametrically opposed to those in Germany. In that country, as we know, the revolutionary Social-Democrats are in favor of preserving that which exists – the old programme and the tactics, which are universally known and have been elucidated in all their details by many decades of experience. But the "Critics" desire to introduce changes, and since these Critics represent an insignificant minority, and since they are very timid in their revisionist efforts, one can understand the motives of the majority in confining themselves to the dry rejection of "innovations". In Russia, however, it is the Critics and the Economists who are in favor of preserving that which exists: the "Critics" want us to go on regarding them as Marxists and to guarantee them the "freedom of criticism" they enjoyed to the full (for, in fact, they never recognized any kind of *party* ties, [19] and, moreover, we never had a generally recognized party body that could "restrict" freedom of criticism, if only by counsel); the Economists want the revolutionaries to recognize the sovereign character of the present movement" (*Rabocheye Dyelo* , No. 10, p. 25), i.e., to recognize the "legitimacy" of that which exists; they want the "ideologists" not to try to "divert" the movement from the path that "is determined by the interaction of material. elements and material environment" ("Letter" in *Iskra* , No. 12); they want to have that struggle recognized as desirable "which it is possible for the workers to wage under

the present conditions", and as the only possible struggle, that "which they are actually waging at the present time" (" *Separate Supplement* " to *Rabochaya Mysl* , p. 14). We revolutionary Social-Democrats, on the contrary, are dissatisfied with this worship of spontaneity, i.e., of that which exists "at the present moment". We demand that the tactics that have prevailed in recent years be changed; we declare that "before we can unite, and in order that we may unite, we must first of all draw firm and definite lines of demarcation" (see announcement of the publication of *Iskra*). [20] In a word, the Germans stand for that which exists and reject changes; we demand a change of that which exists, and reject subservience thereto and reconciliation to it.

This "slight" difference our "free" copyists of German resolutions failed to notice.

D. Engels On the Importance of the Theoretical Struggle

"Dogmatism, doctrinairism", "ossification of the party – the inevitable retribution that follows the violent strait-lacing of thought" – these are the enemies against which the knightly champions of "freedom of criticism" in *Rabocheye Dyelo* rise up in arms. We are very glad that this question has been placed on the order of the day and we would only propose to add to it one other:

And who are the judges?

We have before us two publishers' announcements. One, "The Programme of the Periodical Organ of the Union of Russian Social Democrats Abroad – *Rabocheye Dyelo* " (reprint from No. 1 of *Rabocheye Dyelo*), and the other, the "Announcement of the Resumption of the Publications of the Emancipation of Labour Group". Both are dated 1899, when the "crisis of Marxism" had long been under discussion. And what do we find? We would seek in vain in the first announcement for any reference to this phenomenon, or a definite statement of the position the new organ intends to adopt on this question. Not a word is said about theoretical work and the urgent tasks that now confront it, either in this programme or in the

supplements to it that were adopted by the Third Congress of the Union Abroad in 1901 (*Two Conferences* , pp. 15-18). During this entire time the Editorial Board of *Rabocheye Dyelo* ignored theoretical questions, in spite of the fact that these were questions that disturbed the minds of all Social-Democrats the world over.

The other announcement, on the contrary, points first of all to the declining interest in theory in recent years, imperatively demands "vigilant attention to the theoretical aspect of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat", and calls for "ruthless criticism of the Bernsteinian and other anti-revolutionary tendencies" in our movement. The issues of *Zarya* to date show how this programme has been carried out.

Thus, we see that high-sounding phrases against the ossification of thought, etc., conceal unconcern and helplessness with regard to the development of theoretical thought. The case of the Russian Social-Democrats manifestly illustrates the general European phenomenon (long ago noted also by the German Marxists) that the much vaunted freedom of criticism does not imply substitution of one theory for another, but freedom from all integral and pondered theory; it implies eclecticism and lack of principle. Those who have the slightest acquaintance with the actual state of our movement cannot but see that the wide spread of Marxism was accompanied by a certain lowering of the theoretical level. Quite a number of people with very little, and even a total lack of theoretical training joined the movement because of its practical significance and its practical successes. We can judge from that how tactless *Rabocheye Dyelo* is when, with an air of triumph, it quotes Marx's statement: "Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes." [21] To repeat these words in a period of theoretical disorder is like wishing mourners at a funeral many happy returns of the day. Moreover, these words of Marx are taken from his letter on the Gotha Programme, [22] in which he *sharply condemns* eclecticism in the formulation of principles. If you must unite, Marx wrote to the party leaders, then enter into agreements to satisfy the practical aims of the movement, but do not allow any bargaining over principles, do not make theoretical "concessions". This was Marx's idea, and yet there are people among us who seek-in his name to belittle the significance of theory!

Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. This idea cannot be insisted upon too strongly at a time when the fashionable preaching of opportunism goes hand in hand with an infatuation for the narrowest forms of practical activity. Yet, for Russian Social-Democrats the importance of theory is enhanced by three other circumstances, which are often forgotten: first, by the fact that our Party is only in process of formation, its features are only just becoming defined, and it has as yet far from settled accounts with the other trends of revolutionary thought that threaten to divert the movement from the correct path. On the contrary, precisely the very recent past was marked by a revival of non-Social-Democratic revolutionary trends (a result which Axelrod long ago warned the Economists). Under these circumstances, what at first sight appears to be an "unimportant" error may lead to most deplorable consequences, and only short-sighted people can consider factional disputes and a strict differentiation between shades of opinion inopportune or superfluous. The fate of Russian Social-Democracy for very many years to come may depend on the strengthening of one or the other "shade".

Secondly, the Social-Democratic movement is in its very essence an international movement. This means, not only that we must combat national chauvinism, but that an incipient movement in a young country can be successful only if it makes use of the experiences of other countries. In order to make use of these experiences it is not enough merely to be acquainted with them, or simply to copy out the latest resolutions. What is required is the ability to treat these experiences critically and to test them independently. He who realizes how enormously the modern working-class movement has grown and branched out will understand what a reserve of theoretical forces and political (as well as revolutionary) experience is required to carry out this task.

Thirdly, the national tasks of Russian Social-Democracy are such that they have never confronted any other socialist party in the world. We shall have occasion further on to deal with the political and organizational duties which the task of emancipating the whole people from the yoke of autocracy imposes upon us. At this point, we wish to state only that the *role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the*

most advanced theory. To have a concrete understanding of what this means, let the reader recall such predecessors of Russian Social Democracy as Herzen, Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, and the brilliant galaxy of revolutionaries of the seventies; let him ponder over the world significance which Russian literature is now acquiring; let him. . . but be that enough!

Let us quote what Engels said in 1874 concerning the significance of theory in the Social-Democratic movement. Engels recognizes, *not two* forms of the great struggle of Social Democracy (political and economic), as is the fashion among us, *but three, placing the theoretical struggle on a par with the first two* . His recommendations to the German working-class movement, which had become strong, practically and politically, are so instructive from the standpoint of present-day problems and controversies, that we hope the reader will not be vexed with us for quoting a long passage from his prefatory note to *Der deutsche Bauernkrieg* , [23] which has long become a great bibliographical rarity:

"The German workers have two important advantages over those of the rest of Europe. First, they belong to the most theoretical people of Europe; and they have retained that sense of theory which the so-called 'educated' classes of Germany have almost completely lost. Without German philosophy, which preceded it, particularly that of Hegel, German scientific socialism – the only scientific socialism that has ever existed – would never have come into being. Without a sense of theory among the workers, this scientific socialism would never have entered their flesh and blood as much as is the case. What an immeasurable advantage this is may be seen, on the one hand, from the indifference towards all theory, which is one of the main reasons why the English working-class movement crawls along so slowly in spite of the splendid organization of the individual unions; on the other hand, from the mischief and confusion wrought by Proudhonism, in its original form, among the French and Belgians, and, in the form further caricatured by Bakunin, among the Spaniards and Italians.

"The second advantage is that, chronologically speaking, the Germans were about the last to come into the workers' movement. Just as German theoretical socialism will never forget that it rests on the shoulders of Saint-

Simon, Fourier, and Owen – three men who, in spite of all their fantastic notions and all their utopianism, have their place among the most eminent thinkers of all times, and whose genius anticipated innumerable things, the correctness of which is now being scientifically proved by us – so the practical workers' movement in Germany ought never to forget that it has developed on the shoulders of the English and French movements, that it was able simply to utilize their dearly bought experience, and could now avoid their mistakes, which in their time were mostly unavoidable. Without the precedent of the English trade unions and French workers' political struggles, without the gigantic impulse given especially by the Paris Commune, where would we be now?

"It must be said to the credit of the German workers that they have exploited the advantages of their situation with rare understanding. For the first time since a workers' movement has existed, the struggle is being conducted pursuant to its three sides – the. theoretical, the political, and the practical-economic (resistance to the capitalists) – in harmony and in its interconnections, and in a systematic way. It is precisely in this, as it were, concentric attack, that the strength and invincibility of the German movement lies.

"Due to this advantageous situation, on the one hand, and to the insular peculiarities of the English and the forcible suppression of the French movement, on the other, the German workers have for the moment been placed in the vanguard of the proletarian struggle. How long events will allow them to occupy this post of honor cannot be foretold. But let us hope that as long as they occupy it, they will fill it fittingly. This demands redoubled efforts in every field of struggle and agitation. In particular, it will be the duty of the leaders to gain an ever clearer insight into all theoretical questions, to free themselves more and more from the influence of traditional phrases inherited from the old world outlook, and constantly to keep in mind that socialism, since it has become a science, demands that it be pursued as a science, i.e., that it be studied. The task will be to spread with increased zeal among the masses of the workers the ever more clarified understanding thus acquired, to knit together ever more firmly the organization both of the party and of the trade unions....

"If the German workers progress in this way, they will not. be marching exactly at the head of the movement – it is not at all in the interest of this movement that the workers of any particular country should march at its head – but they will occupy an honorable place in the battle line; and they will stand armed for battle when either unexpectedly grave trials or momentous events demand of them increased courage, increased determination and energy." [24]

Engels's words proved prophetic. Within a few years the German workers were subjected to unexpectedly grave trials in the form of the Exceptional Law Against the Socialists. And they met those trials armed for battle and succeeded in emerging from them victorious.

The Russian proletariat will have to undergo trials immeasurably graver; it will have to fight a monster compared with which an antisocialist law in a constitutional country seems but a dwarf. History has now confronted us with an immediate task which is the *most revolutionary* of all the *immediate* tasks confronting the proletariat of any country. The fulfillment of this task, the destruction of the most powerful bulwark, not only of European, but (it may now be said) of Asiatic reaction, would make the Russian proletariat the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat. And we have the right to count upon acquiring this honorable title, already earned by our predecessors, the revolutionaries of the seventies, if we succeed in inspiring our movement, which is a thousand times broader and deeper, with the same devoted determination and vigor.

Chapter 2: The Spontaneity of the Masses and the Consciousness of the Social-Democrats

We have said that our movement, much more extensive and deep than the movement of the seventies, must be inspired with the same devoted determination and energy that inspired the movement at that time. Indeed, no one, we think, has until now doubted that the strength of the present-day movement lies in the awakening of the masses (principally, the industrial proletariat) and that its weakness lies in the lack of consciousness and initiative among the revolutionary leaders.

However, of late a staggering discovery has been made, which threatens to disestablish all hitherto prevailing views on this question. This discovery was made by *Rabocheye Dyelo* , which in its polemic with *Iskra* and *Zarya* did not confine itself to making objections on separate points, but tried to ascribe "general disagreements" to a more profound cause — to the "different appraisals of the *relative* importance of the spontaneous and consciously 'methodical' element". *Rabocheye Dyelo* formulated its indictment as a " *belittling of the significance of the objective or the spontaneous element of development* ". [25] To this we say: Had the polemics with *Iskra* and *Zarya* resulted in nothing more than causing *Rabocheye Dyelo* to hit upon these "general disagreements", that alone would give us considerable satisfaction, so significant is this thesis and so clear is the light it sheds on the quintessence of the present-day theoretical and political differences that exist among Russian Social-Democrats.

For this reason the question of the relation between consciousness and spontaneity is of such enormous general interest, and for this reason the question must be dealt with in great detail.

A. The Beginning of the Spontaneous Upsurge

In the previous chapter we pointed out how *universally* absorbed the educated youth of Russia was in the theories of Marxism in the middle of the nineties. In the same period the strikes that followed the famous St. Petersburg industrial war of 1896 assumed a similar general character. Their spread over the whole of Russia clearly showed the depth of the newly awakening popular movement, and if we are to speak of the "spontaneous element" then, of course, it is this strike movement which, first and foremost, must be regarded as spontaneous. But there is spontaneity and spontaneity. Strikes occurred in Russia in the seventies and sixties (and even in the first half of the nineteenth century), and they were accompanied by the "spontaneous" destruction of machinery, etc. Compared with these "revolts", the strikes of the nineties might even be described as "conscious", to such an extent do they mark the progress which the working-class movement made in that period. This shows that the "spontaneous element", in essence, represents nothing more nor less than. consciousness in an *embryonic form* . Even the primitive revolts expressed the awakening of consciousness to a certain extent. The workers were losing their age-long faith in the permanence of the system which oppressed them and began... I shall not say to understand, but to sense the necessity for collective resistance, definitely abandoning their slavish submission to the authorities. But this was, nevertheless, more in the nature of outbursts of desperation and vengeance than of *struggle* . The strikes of the nineties revealed far greater flashes of consciousness; definite demands were advanced, the strike was carefully timed, known cases and instances in other places were discussed, etc. The revolts were simply the resistance of the oppressed, whereas the systematic strikes represented the class struggle in embryo, but only in embryo. Taken by themselves, these strikes were simply trade union struggles, not yet Social Democratic struggles. They marked the awakening antagonisms between workers and employers; but the workers were not, and could not be, conscious of the irreconcilable antagonism of their interests to the whole of the modern political and social system, i.e., theirs was not yet Social-Democratic consciousness. In this sense, the strikes of the nineties, despite the enormous progress they represented as compared with the "revolts", remained a purely spontaneous movement.

We have said that *there could not have been* Social-Democratic consciousness among the workers. It would have to be brought to them

from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e., the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers, and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labor legislation, etc. [26] The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical, and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, by intellectuals. By their social status the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia. In the very same way, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of Social-Democracy arose altogether independently of the spontaneous growth of the working-class movement; it arose as a natural and inevitable outcome of the development of thought among the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia. In the period under discussion, the middle nineties, this doctrine not only represented the completely formulated programme of the Emancipation of Labour group, but had already won over to its side the majority of the revolutionary youth in Russia.

Hence, we had both the spontaneous awakening of the working masses, their awakening to conscious life and conscious struggle, and a revolutionary youth, armed with Social-Democratic theory and straining towards the workers. In this connection it is particularly important to state the oft-forgotten (and comparatively little-known) fact that, although the *early* Social-Democrats of that period *zealously carried on economic agitation* (being guided in this activity by the truly useful indications contained in the pamphlet *On Agitation* , [27] then still in manuscript), they did not regard this as their sole task. On the contrary, *from the very beginning* they set for Russian Social-Democracy the most far-reaching historical tasks, in general, and the task of overthrowing the autocracy, in particular. Thus, towards the end of 1895, the St. Petersburg group of Social-Democrats, which founded the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, prepared the first issue of a newspaper called *Rabocheye Dyelo* . This issue was ready to go to press when it was seized by the gendarmes, on the night of December 8, 1895, in a raid on the house of one of the members of the group, Anatoly Alexeyevich Vaneyev, [28] so that the first edition of *Rabocheye Dyelo* was not destined to see the

light of day. The leading article in this issue (which perhaps thirty years hence some *Russkaya Starina* [29] will unearth in the archives of the Department of Police) outlined the historical tasks of the working class in Russia and placed the achievement of political liberty at their head. The issue also contained an article entitled "What Are Our Ministers Thinking About?" [30] which dealt with the crushing of the elementary education committees by the police. In addition, there was some correspondence from St. Petersburg, and from other parts of Russia (e.g., a letter on the massacre of the workers in Yaroslavl Gubernia). This, "first effort", if we are not mistaken, of the Russian Social-Democrats of the nineties was not a purely local, or less still, "Economic", newspaper, but one that aimed to unite the strike movement with the revolutionary movement against the autocracy, and to win over to the side of Social-Democracy all who were oppressed by the policy of reactionary obscurantism. No one, in the slightest degree, acquainted with the state of the movement at that period could doubt that such a paper would have met with warm response among the workers of the capital and the revolutionary intelligentsia and would have had a wide circulation. The failure of the enterprise merely showed that the Social-Democrats of that period were unable to meet the immediate requirements of the time owing to their lack of revolutionary experience and practical training. This must be said, too, with regard to the *S. Peterburgsky Rabochy Listok* [31] and particularly with regard to Rabochaya Gazeta and the *Manifesto* of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, founded in the spring of 1898. Of course, we would not dream of blaming the Social Democrats of that time for this unpreparedness. But in order to profit from the experience of that movement, and to draw practical lessons from it, we must thoroughly understand the causes and significance of this or that shortcoming. It is therefore highly important to establish the fact that a part (perhaps even a majority) of the Social-Democrats, active in the period of 1895-98, justly considered it possible even then, at the very beginning of the "spontaneous" movement, to come forward with a most extensive programme and a militant tactical line. [32] Lack of training of the majority of the revolutionaries, an entirely natural phenomenon, could not have roused any particular fears. Once the tasks were correctly defined, once the energy existed for repeated attempts to fulfill them, temporary failures represented only part misfortune. Revolutionary experience and organizational skill are things that can be acquired, provided the desire is

there to acquire them, provided the shortcomings are recognized, which in revolutionary activity is more than half-way towards their removal.

But what was only part misfortune became full misfortune when this consciousness began to grow dim (it was very much alive among the members of the groups mentioned), when there appeared people—and even Social -Democratic organs—that were prepared to regard shortcomings as virtues, that even tried to invent a *theoretical* basis for their *slavish cringing before spontaneity* . It is time to draw conclusions from this trend, the content of which is incorrectly and too narrowly characterized as Economism.

B. Bowing to Spontaneity. *Rabochaya Mysl*

Before dealing with the literary manifestation of this subservience to spontaneity, we should like to note the following characteristic fact (communicated to us from the above-mentioned source), which throws light on the conditions in which the two future conflicting trends in Russian Social-Democracy arose and grew among the comrades working in St. Petersburg. In the beginning of 1897, just prior to their banishment, A. A. Vaneyev and several of his comrades attended a private meeting [33] at which "old" and "young" members of the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class gathered. The conversation centered chiefly about the question of organization, particularly about the "rules for the workers' mutual benefit fund", which, in their final form, were published in *"Listok" Rabotnika* , [34] No. 9-10, p. 46. Sharp differences immediately showed themselves between the "old" members ("Decembrists", as the St. Petersburg Social Democrats jestingly called them) and several the "young" members (who subsequently took an active part in the work of *Rabochaya Mysl*), with a heated discussion ensuing. The "young" members defended the main principles of the rules in the form in which they were published. The "old" members contended that the prime necessity was not this, but the consolidation of the League of Struggle into an organization of revolutionaries to which all the various workers' mutual

benefit funds, students' propaganda circles, etc., should be subordinated. It goes without saying that the disputing sides far from realized at the time that these disagreements were the beginning of a cleavage; on the contrary, they regarded them as something isolated and casual. But this fact shows that in Russia, too, Economism did not arise and spread without a struggle against the "old" Social-Democrats (which the Economists of today are apt to forget). And if, in the main, this struggle has not left "documentary" traces behind it, it is *solely* because the membership of the circles then functioning underwent such constant change that no continuity was established and, consequently, differences in point of view were not recorded in any documents.

The founding of *Rabochaya Mysl* brought Economism to the light of day, but not at one stroke. We must picture to ourselves concretely the conditions for activity and the short-lived character of the majority of the Russian study circles (a thing that is possible only for those who have themselves experienced it) in order to understand how much there was of the fortuitous in the successes and failures of the new trend in various towns, and the length of time during which neither the advocates nor the opponents of the "new" could make up their minds — and literally had no opportunity of so doing — as to whether this really expressed a distinct trend or merely the lack of training of certain individuals. For example, the first mimeographed copies of *Rabochaya Mysl* never reached the great majority of Social-Democrats, and if we are able to refer to the leading article in the first number, it is only because it was reproduced in an article by V. I. [35] (*"Listok" Rabotnika* , No. 9-10, p. 47, et seq.), who, of course, did not fail to extol with more zeal than reason the new paper, which was so different from the papers and projects for papers mentioned above. [36] It is well worth dwelling on this leading article because it brings out in bold relief *the entire spirit of Rabochaya Mysl* and Economism generally.

After stating that the arm of the "blue-coats" [37] could never halt the progress of the working-class movement, the leading article goes on to say: ". . . The virility of the working-class movement is due to the fact that the workers themselves are at last taking their fate into their own hands, and out of the hands of the leaders"; this fundamental thesis is then developed in

greater detail. Actually, the leaders (i.e., the Social-Democrats, the organizers of the League of Struggle) were, one might say, torn out of the hands of the workers [38] by the police; yet it is made to appear that the workers were fighting against the leaders and liberated themselves from their yoke! Instead of sounding the call to go forward towards the consolidation of the revolutionary organization and the expansion of political activity, the call was issued for a *retreat* to the purely trade union struggle. It was announced that "the economic basis of the movement is eclipsed by the effort never to forget the political ideal", and that the watchword for the working-class movement was "Struggle for economic conditions" (!) or, better still, "The workers for the workers". It was declared that strike funds "are more valuable to the movement than a hundred other Organizations" (compare this statement made in October 1897, with the polemic between the "Decembrists" and the young members in the beginning of 1897), etc. Catchwords like "We must concentrate, not on the 'cream' of the workers, but on the 'average', mass worker"; "Politics always obediently follows economics", [39] etc., etc., became the fashion, exercising an irresistible influence upon the masses of the youth who were attracted to the movement but who, in the majority of cases, were acquainted only with such fragments of Marxism as were expounded in legally appearing publications.

Political consciousness was completely overwhelmed by spontaneity — the spontaneity of the "Social-Democrats" who repeated Mr. V. V.'s "ideas", the spontaneity of those workers who were carried away by the arguments that a kopek added to a ruble was worth more than any socialism or politics, and that they must "fight, knowing that they are fighting, not for the sake of some future generation, but for themselves and their children" (leader in *Rabochaya Mysl* , No. 1). Phrases like these have always been a favorite weapon of the West-European bourgeois, who, in their hatred for socialism, strove (like the German " *Sozial-Politiker* " Hirsch) to transplant English trade-unionism to their native soil and to preach to the workers that by engaging in the purely trade union struggle [40] they would be fighting for themselves and for their children, and not for some future generations with some future socialism. And now the "V. V.s of Russian Social-Democracy" have set about repeating these bourgeois phrases. It is important at this

point to note three circumstances that will be useful to our further analysis of *contemporary* differences. [41]

In the first place, the overwhelming of political consciousness by spontaneity, to which we referred above, also took place *spontaneously* . This may sound like a pun, but, alas, it is the bitter truth. It did not take place as a result of an open struggle between two diametrically opposed points of view, in which one triumphed over the other; it occurred because of the fact that an increasing number of "old" revolutionaries were "torn away" by the gendarmes and increasing numbers of "young" "V. V.s of Russian Social Democracy" appeared on the scene. Everyone, who has, I shall not say participated in, but at least breathed the atmosphere of, the *present-day* Russian movement, knows perfectly well that this is precisely the case. And if, nevertheless, we insist strongly that the reader be fully clear on this generally known fact, if we cite, for explicitness, as it were, the facts of the first edition of *Rabocheye Dyelo* and of the polemic between the "old" and the "young" at the beginning of 1897, we do this because the people who vaunt their "democracy" speculate on the ignorance of these facts on the part of the broad public (or of the very young generation). We shall return to this point further on.

Secondly, in the very first literary expression of Economism we observe the exceedingly curious phenomenon — highly characteristic for an understanding of all the differences prevailing among present day Social Democrats — that the adherents of the "labor movement pure and simple", worshippers of the closest "organic" contacts (*Rabocheye Dyelo* 's term) with the proletarian struggle, opponents of any non-worker intelligentsia (even a socialist intelligentsia), are compelled, in order to defend their positions, to resort to the arguments of the *bourgeois* "pure trade-unionists". This shows that from the very outset *Rabochaya Mysl* began — unconsciously — to implement the programme of the *Credo* . This shows (something *Rabocheye Dyelo* cannot grasp) that *all* worship of the spontaneity of the working class movement, all belittling of the role of "the conscious element", of the role of Social-Democracy, *means, quite independently of whether he who belittles that role desires it or not, a strengthening of the influence of bourgeois ideology upon the workers.* All

those who talk about "overrating the importance of ideology", [42] about exaggerating the role of the conscious element, [43] etc., imagine that the labor movement pure and simple can elaborate, and will elaborate, an independent ideology for itself, if only the workers "wrest their fate from the hands of the leaders". But this is a profound mistake. To supplement what has been said above, we shall quote the following profoundly true and important words of Karl. Kautsky on the new draft programme of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party: [44]

"Many of our revisionist critics believe that Marx asserted that economic development and the class struggle create, not only the conditions for socialist production, but also, and directly, the *consciousness* [K. K.'s italics] of its necessity. And these critics assert that England, the country most highly developed capitalistically, is more remote than any other from this consciousness. Judging by the draft, one might assume that this allegedly orthodox Marxist view, which is thus refuted, was shared by the committee that drafted the Austrian programme. In the draft programme it is stated: 'The more capitalist development increases the numbers of the proletariat, the more the proletariat is compelled and becomes fit to fight against capitalism. The proletariat becomes conscious of the possibility and of the necessity for socialism.' In this connection socialist consciousness appears to be a necessary and direct result of the proletarian class struggle. But this is absolutely untrue. Of course, socialism, as a doctrine, has its roots in modern economic relationships just as the class struggle of the proletariat has, and, like the latter, emerges from the struggle against the capitalist-created poverty and misery of the masses. But socialism and the class struggle arise side by side and not one out of the other; each arises under different conditions. Modern socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge. Indeed, modern economic science is as much a condition for socialist production as, say, modern technology, and the proletariat can create neither the one nor the other, no matter how much it may desire to do so; both arise out of the modern social process. The vehicle of science is not the proletariat, but the *bourgeois intelligentsia* [K. K.'s italics]: it was in the minds of individual members of this stratum that modern socialism originated, and it was they who communicated it to the more intellectually developed proletarians who, in

their turn, introduce it into the proletarian class struggle where conditions allow that to be done. Thus, socialist consciousness is something introduced into the proletarian class struggle from without [*von Aussen Hineingetragenes*] and not something that arose within it spontaneously [*urwüchsig*]. Accordingly, the old Hainfeld programme quite rightly stated that the task of Social-Democracy is to imbue the proletariat (literally: saturate the proletariat) with the *consciousness* of its position and the consciousness of its task. There would be no need for this if consciousness arose of itself from the class struggle. The new draft copied this proposition from the old programme, and attached it to the proposition mentioned above. But this completely broke the line of thought..."

Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology formulated by the working masses themselves in the process of their movement, [45] the only choice is — either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course (for mankind has not created a " third" ideology , and, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or an above-class ideology). Hence, to belittle the socialist ideology *in any way, to turn aside from it in the slightest degree* means to strengthen bourgeois ideology. There is much talk of spontaneity. But the *spontaneous* development of the working-class movement leads to its subordination to bourgeois ideology, *to its development along the lines of the Credo programme;* for the spontaneous working-class movement is trade-unionism, is *Nur-Gewerkschaftlerei* , and trade unionism means the ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie. Hence, our task, the task of Social-Democracy, is *to combat spontaneity, to divert* the working-class movement from this spontaneous, trade-unionist striving to come under the wing of the bourgeoisie, and to bring it under the wing of revolutionary Social Democracy. The sentence employed by the authors of the Economist letter published in *Iskra* , No. 12, that the efforts of the most inspired ideologists fail to divert the working-class movement from the path that is determined by the interaction of the material elements and the material environment is therefore *tantamount to renouncing socialism* . If these authors were capable of fearlessly, consistently, and thoroughly considering what they say, as everyone who enters the arena of literary and public activity should be, there would be nothing left for them but to "fold their useless arms over their empty breasts " and surrender the field of

action to the Struves and Prokopoviches , who are dragging the working-class movement “along the line of least resistance”, i.e., along the line of bourgeois trade-unionism, or to the Zubatovs, who are dragging it along the line of clerical and gendarme “ideology”.

Let us recall the example of Germany. What was the historic service Lassalle rendered to the German working-class movement? It was that he *diverted* that movement from the path of progressionist trade-unionism and cooperativism towards which it had been spontaneously moving (*with the benign assistance of Schulze-Delitzsch and his like*). To fulfill such a task it was necessary to do something quite different from talking of underrating the spontaneous element, of tactics-as-process, of the interaction between elements and environment, etc. *A fierce struggle against spontaneity* was necessary, and only after such a struggle, extending over many years, was it possible, for instance, to convert the working population of Berlin from a bulwark of the progressionist party into one of the finest strongholds of Social-Democracy. This struggle is by no means over even today (as might seem to those who learn the history of the German movement from Prokopovich, and its philosophy from Struve). Even now the German working class is, so to speak, split up among a number of ideologies. A section of the workers is organized in Catholic and monarchist trade unions; another section is organized in the Hirsch-Duncker [46] unions, founded by the bourgeois worshippers of English trade-unionism; the third is organized in Social-Democratic trade unions. The last-named group is immeasurably more numerous than the rest, but the Social-Democratic ideology was able to achieve this superiority, and will be able to maintain it, only in an unswerving struggle against all other ideologies.

But why, the reader will ask, does the spontaneous movement, the movement along the line of least resistance, lead to the domination of bourgeois ideology? For the simple reason that bourgeois ideology is far older in origin than socialist ideology, that it is more fully developed, and that it has at its disposal *immeasurably* more means of dissemination. [47] And the younger the socialist movement in any given country, the more vigorously it must struggle against all attempts to entrench non-socialist ideology, and the more resolutely the workers must be warned against the

bad counselors who shout against "overrating the conscious element", etc. The authors of the Economist letter, in unison with *Rabocheye Dyelo* , inveigh against the intolerance that is characteristic of the infancy of the movement. To this we reply: Yes, our movement is indeed in its infancy, and in order that it may grow up faster, it must become imbued with intolerance against those who retard its growth by their subservience to spontaneity. Nothing is so ridiculous and harmful as pretending that we are "old hands" who have long ago experienced all the decisive stages of the struggle.

Thirdly, the first issue of Rabochaya Mysl shows that the term "Economism" (which, of course, we do not propose to abandon, since, in one way or another, this designation has already established itself) does not adequately convey the real character of the new trend. *Rabochaya Mysl* does not altogether repudiate the political struggle; the rules for a workers' mutual benefit fund published in its first issue contain a reference to combating the government. *Rabochaya Mysl* believes, however, that "politics always obediently follows economics" (*Rabocheye Dyelo* varies this thesis when it asserts in its programme that "in Russia more than in any other country, the economic struggle is *inseparable* from the political struggle"). *If by politics is meant Social-Democratic politics,* then the theses of Rabochaya Mysl and *Rabocheye Dyelo* are utterly incorrect. The economic struggle of the workers is very often connected (although not inseparably) with bourgeois politics, clerical politics, etc., as we have seen. *Rabocheye Dyelo* 's theses are correct, if by politics is meant trade union politics, viz., the common striving of all workers to secure from the government measures for alleviating the distress to which their condition gives rise, but which do not abolish that condition, i.e., which do not remove the subjection of labor to capital. That striving indeed is common to the English trade-unionists, who are hostile to socialism, to the Catholic workers, to the "Zubatov" workers, etc. There is politics and politics. Thus, we see that *Rabochaya Mysl* does not so much deny the political struggle, as it bows to its *spontaneity* , to its unconsciousness. While fully recognizing the political struggle (better: the political desires and demands of the workers), which arises spontaneously from the working-class movement itself, it absolutely refuses *independently to work out* a specifically *Social-Democratic politics* corresponding to the general tasks

of socialism and to present-day conditions in Russia. Further on we shall show that *Rabocheye Dyelo* commits the same error.

C. The Self-Emancipation Group [48] and *Rabocheye Dyelo*

We have dealt at such length with the little-known and now almost forgotten leading article in the first issue of Rabochaya Mysl because it was the first and most striking expression of that general stream of thought which afterwards emerged into the light of day in innumerable streamlets. V. I. was perfectly right when, in praising the first issue and the leading article of *Rabochaya Mysl* , he said that the article had been written in a "sharp and fervent" manner (*"Listok" Rabotnika* , No. 9-10, p. 49). Every man with convictions who thinks he has something new to say writes "fervently" and in such a way as to make his views stand out in bold relief. Only those who are accustomed to sitting between two stools lack "fervor"; only such people are able to praise the fervor of *Rabochaya Mysl* one day and attack the "fervent polemics" of its opponents the next.

We shall not dwell on the *"Separate Supplement" to Rabochaya Mysl* (below we shall have occasion, on various points, to refer to this work, which expresses the ideas of the Economists more consistently than any other) but shall briefly mention the "Appeal of the Self-Emancipation of the Workers Group" (March 1899, reprinted in the London *Nakanune* , [49] No. 7, July 1899). The authors of the "Appeal" rightly say that "the workers of Russia are *only just awakening,* are just beginning to look about them, and are *instinctively clutching at the first available means of struggle"* . Yet they draw from this the same false conclusion as that drawn by *Rabochaya Mysl* , forgetting that the instinctive is the unconscious (the spontaneous) to the aid of which socialists must come; that the "first available means of struggle" will always be, in modern society, the trade union means of struggle, and the "first available" ideology the bourgeois (trade union) ideology. Similarly, these authors do not "repudiate" politics, they merely (merely!) echo Mr. V. V. that politics is the superstructure, and therefore, "political agitation must be the superstructure to the agitation carried on in

favor of the economic struggle; it must arise on the basis of this struggle and follow in its wake".

As for *Rabocheye Dyelo* , it began its activity with the "defense" of the Economists. It stated a *downright untruth* in its opening issue (No. 1, pp. 141-42) in claiming that it "does not know to which young comrades Axelrod referred" when he warned the Economists in his well-known pamphlet. [50] In the polemic that flared up with Axelrod and Plekhanov over this untruth, *Rabocheye Dyelo* had to admit that "in form of perplexity, it sought *to defend* all the younger Social-Democrats abroad from this unjust accusation" (the charge of narrowness leveled by Axelrod at the Economists). In reality this accusation was completely justified, and *Rabocheye Dyelo* knew perfectly well that, among others, it applied also to V. I., a member of its Editorial Board. Let me note in passing that in this polemic Axelrod was entirely right and *Rabocheye Dyelo* entirely wrong in their respective interpretations of my pamphlet *The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats* . [51] The pamphlet was written in 1897, before the appearance of *Rabochaya Mysl* , when I thought, rightly, that the *original tendency* of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle, which I characterized above, was dominant. And this tendency was dominant at least until the middle of 1898. Consequently, *Rabocheye Dyelo* had no right whatsoever, in its attempt to deny the existence and danger of Economism, to refer to a pamphlet that expressed views *forced out* by Economist views in St. Petersburg in 1897-98. [52]

But *Rabocheye Dyelo* not only "defended" the Economists, it itself constantly fell into their fundamental errors. The source of this confusion is to be found in the ambiguity of the interpretation given to the following thesis of the *Rabocheye Dyelo* programme: "We consider that the most important phenomenon of Russian life, the one that will mainly *determine the tasks* [our italics] and the character of the publication activity of the Union, is the *mass working-class movement* [*Rabocheye Dyelo* 's italics] which has arisen in recent years." That the mass movement is a most important phenomenon is a fact not to be disputed. But the crux of the matter is, how is one to understand the statement that the mass working class movement will "determine the tasks"? It may be interpreted in one of

two ways. *Either* it means bowing to the spontaneity of this movement, i.e., reducing the role of Social-Democracy to mere subservience to the working-class movement as such (the interpretation of *Rabochaya Mysl* , the Self-Emancipation Group, and other Economists), or it means that the mass movement places before us new theoretical, political, and organizational tasks, far more complicated than those that might have satisfied us in the period before the rise of the mass movement. *Rabocheye Dyelo* inclined and still inclines towards the first interpretation, for it has said nothing definite about any new tasks, but has argued constantly as though the "mass movement" *relieves* us of the necessity of clearly understanding and fulfilling the tasks it sets before us. We need only point out that *Rabocheye Dyelo* considered that it was impossible to set the overthrow of the autocracy as the *first* task of the mass working-class movement, and that it degraded this task (in the name of the mass movement) to that of a struggle for immediate political demands (Reply, p. 25).

We shall pass over the article by B. Krichevsky, editor of *Rabocheye Dyelo* , entitled "The Economic and the Political Struggle in the Russian Movement", published in No. 7 of that paper, in which these very mistakes [53] are repeated, and proceed directly to *Rabocheye Dyelo* , No. 10. We shall not, of course, enter in detail into the various objections raised by Krichevsky and Martynov against *Zarya* and *Iskra* . We are here interested solely in the basis of principles on which *Rabocheye Dyelo* , in its tenth issue, took its stand. Thus, we shall not examine the strange fact that *Rabocheye Dyelo* saw a "diametrical contradiction" between the proposition:

"Social-Democracy does not tie its hands, it does not restrict its activities to some one preconceived plan or method of political struggle; it recognizes all means of struggle as long as they correspond to the forces at-the disposal of the Party," etc. (*Iskra* , No. 1) [54] .

and the proposition:

“Without a strong organization skilled in waging political struggle under all circumstances and at all times, there can be no question of that systematic plan of action, illumined by firm principles and steadfastly carried out, which alone is worthy of the name of tactics” (*Iskra* , No. 4). [55]

To confound recognition, *in principle* , of all means of struggle, of all plans and methods, provided they are expedient, with the demand *at a given political moment* to be guided by a strictly observed plan is tantamount, if we are to talk of tactics, to confounding the recognition by medical science of various methods of treating diseases with the necessity for adopting a certain definite method of treatment for a given disease. The point is, however, that *Rabocheye Dyelo* , itself the victim of a disease which we have called bowing to spontaneity, refuses to recognize any “method of treatment” for that disease. Hence, it has made the remarkable discovery that “tactics-as-plan contradicts the fundamental spirit of Marxism” (No. 10, p. 18), that tactics are “ *a process of growth of Party tasks, which grow together with the Party* ” (p. 11, *Rabocheye Dyelo* ’s italics). This remark has every chance of becoming a celebrated maxim, a permanent monument to the *Rabocheye Dyelo* “trend”. To the question, whither?, the leading organ replies: Movement is a process of changing the distance between the starting-point and subsequent points of the movement. This matchless example of profundity is not merely a curiosity (were it that, it would not be worth dealing with at length), but *the programme of a whole trend* , the very programme which R. M. (in the “ *Separate Supplement* ” to *Rabochaya Mysl*) expressed in the words: That struggle is desirable which is possible, and the struggle which is possible is that which is going on at the given moment. This is precisely the trend of unbounded opportunism, which passively adapts itself to spontaneity.

“Tactics-as-plan contradicts the essence of Marxism!” But this is a slander of Marxism; it means turning Marxism into the caricature held up by the Narodniks in their struggle against us. It means belittling the initiative and energy of class-conscious fighters, whereas Marxism, on the contrary, gives a gigantic impetus to the initiative and energy of the Social-Democrat, opens up for him the widest perspectives, and (if one may so express it) places at his disposal the mighty force of many millions of workers

"spontaneously" rising for the struggle. The entire history of international Social-Democracy teems with plans advanced now by one, now by another political leader, some confirming the far-sightedness and the correct political and organizational views of their authors and others revealing their short-sightedness and their political errors. At the time when Germany was at one of the crucial turning-points in its history — the formation of the Empire, the opening of the Reichstag, and the granting of universal suffrage — Liebknecht had one plan for Social-Democratic politics and work in general, and Schweitzer had another. When the anti-socialist law came down on the heads of the German socialists, Most and Hasselmann had one plan — they were prepared then and there to call for violence and terror; Hochbert, Schramm, and (partly) Bernstein had another — they began to preach to the Social-Democrats that they themselves had provoked the enactment of the law by being unreasonably bitter and revolutionary, and must now earn forgiveness by their exemplary conduct. There was yet a third plan, proposed by those who prepared and carried out the publication of an illegal organ. It is easy, of course, with hindsight, many years after the struggle over the selection of the path to be followed, and after history has pronounced its verdict as to the expediency of the path selected, to utter profound maxims about the growth of Party tasks, which grow together with the Party. But at a time of confusion, [56] when the Russian "Critics" and Economists are degrading Social-Democracy to the level of trade-unionism, and when the terrorists are strongly advocating the adoption of "tactics-as-plan" that repeats the old mistakes, at such a time, to confine oneself to profundities of this kind, means simply to issue to oneself a "certificate of poverty". At a time when many Russian Social-Democrats suffer from a lack of initiative and energy, from an inadequate "scope of political propaganda, agitation, and organization," [57] from a lack of "plans" for a broader organization of revolutionary work, at such a time, to declare that "tactics-as-plan" contradicts the essence of Marxism means not only to vulgarize Marxism in the realm of theory, but *to drag the Party backward* in practice.

Rabocheye Dyelo goes on to sermonize:

"The task of the revolutionary Social-Democrat is only to accelerate objective development by his conscious work, not to obviate it or substitute his own subjective plans for this development. *Iskra* knows all this in theory; but the enormous importance which Marxism justly attaches to conscious revolutionary work causes it in practice, owing to its doctrinaire view of tactics, *to belittle the significance of the objective or the spontaneous element of development"* (p. 18).

Another example of the extraordinary theoretical confusion worthy of Mr. V. V. and his fraternity. We would ask our philosopher: how may a designer of subjective plans "belittle" objective development? Obviously by losing sight of the fact that this objective development creates or strengthens, destroys or weakens certain classes, strata, or groups, certain nations or groups of nations, etc., and in this way serves to determine a given international political alignment of forces, or the position adopted by revolutionary parties, etc. If the designer of plans did that, his guilt would not be that he belittled the spontaneous element, but, on the contrary, that he belittled the *conscious* element, for he would then show that he lacked the "consciousness" properly to understand objective development. Hence, the very talk of "estimating the *relative* significance" (*Rabocheye Dyelo* 's italics) of spontaneity and consciousness itself reveals a complete lack of "consciousness". If certain "spontaneous elements of development" can be grasped at all by human understanding, then an incorrect estimation of them will be tantamount to "belittling the conscious element". But if they cannot be grasped, then we do not know them, and therefore cannot speak of them. What then is Krichevsky discussing? If he thinks that *Iskra* 's "subjective plans" are erroneous (as he in fact declares them to be), he should have shown what objective facts they ignore, and only then charged *Iskra* with *lacking political consciousness* for ignoring them, with "belittling the conscious element", to use his own words. If, however, displeased with subjective plans, he can bring forward no argument other than that of "belittling the spontaneous element" (!), he merely shows: (1) that, theoretically, he understands Marxism *a la* Kareyev and Mikhailovsky, who have been sufficiently ridiculed by Beltov; [58] and (2) that, practically, he is quite satisfied with the "spontaneous elements of development" that have drawn our legal Marxists towards Bernsteinism and our Social-

Democrats towards Economism, and that he is “full of wrath” against those who have determined at all costs *to divert* Russian Social-Democracy from the path of “spontaneous” development.

Further, there follow things that are positively droll. “Just as human beings will reproduce in the old-fashioned way despite all the discoveries of natural science, so the birth of a new social order will come about, in the future too, *mainly* as a result of elemental outbursts, despite all the discoveries of social science and the increase in the number of conscious fighters” (p. 19). Just as our grandfathers in their old-fashioned wisdom used to say, Anyone can bring children into the world, so today the “modern socialists” (*a la* Nartsis Tuporylov) [59] say in their wisdom, Anyone can participate in the spontaneous birth of a new social order. We too hold that anyone can. All that is required for participation of that kind is *to yield* to Economism when Economism reigns and to terrorism when terrorism arises. Thus, in the spring of this year, when it was so important to utter a note of warning against infatuation with terrorism, *Rabocheye Dyelo* stood in amazement, confronted by a problem that was “new” to it. And now, six months after, when the problem has become less topical, it presents us at one and the same time with the declaration: “We think that it is not and should not be the task of Social-Democracy to counteract the rise of terroristic sentiments” (*Rabocheye Dyelo* , No. 10, p. 23), and with the Conference resolution: “The Conference regards systematic and aggressive terror as being inopportune” (*Two Conferences* , p. 18). How beautifully clear and coherent this is! Not to counteract, but to declare inopportune, and to declare it in such a way that unsystematic and defensive terror does not come within the scope of the “resolution”. It must be admitted that such a resolution is extremely safe and is fully insured against error, just as a man who talks, but says nothing, insures himself against error. All that is needed to frame such a resolution is an ability to keep *at the tail end* of the movement. When *Iskra* ridiculed *Rabocheye Dyelo* for declaring the question of terror to be new, [60] the latter angrily accused *Iskra* of “having the incredible effrontery to impose upon the Party organization solutions of tactical questions proposed by a group of emigrant writers more than fifteen years ago” (p. 24). Effrontery indeed, and what an overestimation of the conscious element — first to resolve questions theoretically beforehand, and then to try to convince the organization, the

Party, and the masses of the correctness of this solution! [61] How much better it would be to repeat the elements and, without "imposing" anything upon anybody, swing with every "turn" — whether in the direction of Economism or in the direction of terrorism. *Rabocheye Dyelo* even generalizes this great precept of worldly wisdom and accuses *Iskra* and *Zarya* of "setting up their programme against the movement, like a spirit hovering over the formless chaos" (p. 29). But what else is the function of Social-Democracy if not to be a "spirit" that not only hovers over the spontaneous movement, but also *raises* this movement *to the level of "its programme"?* Surely, it is not its function to drag at the *tail* of the movement. At best, this would be of no service to the movement; at worst, it would be exceedingly harmful. *Rabocheye Dyelo* , however, not only follows this "tactics-as-process", but elevates it to a principle, so that it would be more correct to describe its tendency not as opportunism, but as *tail-ism* (from the word *tail*). And it must be admitted that those who are determined always to follow behind the movement and be its tail are absolutely and forever guaranteed against "belittling the spontaneous element of development".

And so, we have become convinced that the fundamental error committed by the "new trend" in Russian Social-Democracy is its bowing to spontaneity and its failure to understand that the spontaneity of the masses demands a high degree of consciousness from us Social-Democrats. The greater the spontaneous upsurge of the masses and the more widespread the movement, the more rapid, incomparably so, the demand for greater consciousness in the theoretical, political and organizational work of Social-Democracy.

The spontaneous upsurge of the masses in Russia proceeded (and continues) with such rapidity that the young Social Democrats proved unprepared to meet these gigantic tasks. This unpreparedness is our common misfortune, the misfortune of *all* Russian Social-Democrats. The upsurge of the masses proceeded and spread with uninterrupted continuity; it not only continued in

the places where it began, but spread to new localities and to new strata of the population (under the influence of the working class movement, there was a renewed ferment among the student youth, among the intellectuals generally, and even among the peasantry). Revolutionaries, however, *lagged behind* this upsurge, both in their "theories" and in their activity; they failed to establish a constant and continuous organization capable of *leading* the whole movement.

In Chapter I, we established that *Rabocheye Dyelo* belittled our theoretical tasks and that it "spontaneously" repeated the fashionable catchword "freedom of criticism"; those who repeated this catchword lacked the "consciousness" to understand that the positions of the opportunist "Critics" and those of the revolutionaries in Germany and in Russia are diametrically opposed.

In the following chapters, we shall show how this bowing to spontaneity found expression in the sphere of the political tasks and in the organizational work of Social-Democracy.

Chapter 3: Trade-Unionist Politics and Social-Democratic Politics

We shall again begin by praising *Rabocheye Dyelo* . "Literature of Exposure and the Proletarian Struggle" is the title Martynov gave the article on his differences with *Iskra* published in *Rabocheye Dyelo* , No. 10. He formulated the substance of the differences as follows: "We cannot confine ourselves solely to exposing the system that stands in its (the working-class party's) path of development. We must also react to the immediate and current interests of the proletariat.... *Iskra* . . . is in fact an organ of revolutionary opposition that exposes the state of affairs in our country, particularly the political state of affairs.... We, however, work and shall continue to work for the cause of the working class in close organic contact with the proletarian struggle" (p. 63). One cannot help being grateful to Martynov for this formula. It is of outstanding general interest, because substantially it embraces not only our disagreements with *Rabocheye Dyelo* , but the general disagreement between ourselves and the Economists on the political struggle. We have shown that the Economists do not altogether repudiate "politics", but that they are constantly straying from the Social-Democratic to the trade-unionist conception of politics. Martynov strays in precisely this way, and we shall therefore take his views as a *model* of Economist error on this question. As we shall endeavor to prove, neither the authors of the " *Separate Supplement* " to *Rabochaya Mysl* nor the authors of the manifesto issued by the Self-Emancipation Group, nor the authors of the Economist letter published in *Iskra* , No. 12, will have any right to complain against this choice.

A. Political Agitation And Its Restriction By the Economists

Everyone knows that the economic [62] struggle of the Russian workers underwent widespread development and consolidation simultaneously with

the production of “literature” exposing economic (factory and occupational) conditions. The “leaflets” were devoted mainly to the exposure of the factory system, and very soon a veritable passion for exposures was roused among the workers. As soon as the workers realized that the Social-Democratic study circles desired to, and could, supply them with a new kind of leaflet that told the whole truth about their miserable existence, about their unbearably hard toil, and their lack of rights, they began to send in, actually flood us with, correspondence from the factories and workshops. This “exposure literature” created a tremendous sensation, not only in the particular factory exposed in the given leaflet, but in all the factories to which news of the revealed facts spread. And since the poverty and want among the workers in the various enterprises and in the various trades are much the same, the “truth about the life of the workers” stirred everyone. Even among the most backward workers, a veritable passion arose to “get into print” — a noble passion for this rudimentary form of war against the whole of the present social system which is based upon robbery and oppression. And in the overwhelming majority of cases these “leaflets” were in truth a declaration of war, because the exposures served greatly to agitate the workers; they evoked among them common demands for the removal of the most glaring outrages and roused in them a readiness to support the demands with strikes. Finally, the employers themselves were compelled to recognize the significance of these leaflets as a declaration of war, so much so that in a large number of cases they did not even wait for the outbreak of hostilities. As is always the case, the mere publication of these exposures made them effective, and they acquired the significance of a strong moral influence. On more than one occasion, the mere appearance of a leaflet proved sufficient to secure the satisfaction of all or part of the demands put forward. In a word, economic (factory) exposures were and remain an important lever in the economic struggle. And they will continue to retain this significance as long as there is capitalism, which makes it necessary for the workers to defend themselves. Even in the most advanced countries of Europe it can still be seen that the exposure of abuses in some backward trade, or in some forgotten branch of domestic industry, serves as a starting-point for the awakening of class-consciousness, for the beginning of a trade union struggle, and for the spread of socialism. [63]

The overwhelming majority of Russian Social-Democrats have of late been almost entirely absorbed by this work of organizing the exposure of factory conditions. Suffice it to recall Rabochaya Mysl to see the extent to which they have been absorbed by it — so much so, indeed, that they have lost sight of the fact that this, *taken by itself* , is in essence still not Social-Democratic work, but merely trade union work. As a matter of fact, the exposures merely dealt with the relations between the workers *in a given trade* and their employers, and all they achieved was that the sellers of labor power learned to sell their "commodity" on better terms and to fight the purchasers over a purely commercial deal. These exposures could have served (if properly utilized by an organization of revolutionaries) as a beginning and a component part of Social-Democratic activity; but they could also have led (and, given a worshipful attitude towards spontaneity, were bound to lead) to a "purely trade union" struggle and to a non-Social-Democratic working-class movement. Social-Democracy leads the struggle of the working class, not only for better terms for the sale of labor-power, but for the abolition of the social system that compels the propertyless to sell themselves to the rich. Social-Democracy represents the working class, not in its relation to a given group of employers alone, but in its relation to all classes of modern society and to the state as an organized political force. Hence, it follows that not only must Social-Democrats not confine themselves exclusively to the economic struggle, but that they must not allow the organization of economic exposures to become the predominant part of their activities. We must actively take up the political education of the working class and the development of its political consciousness. *Now* that *Zarya* and *Iskra* have made the first attack upon Economism, "all are agreed" on this (although some agree only in words, as we shall soon see).

The question arises, what should political education consist in? Can it be confined to the propaganda of working-class hostility to the autocracy? Of course not. It is not enough *to explain* to the workers that they are politically oppressed (any more than it is *to explain* to them that their interests are antagonistic to the interests of the employers). Agitation must be conducted with regard to every concrete example of *this* oppression (as we have begun to carry on agitation around concrete examples of economic oppression). Inasmuch as this oppression affects the most diverse classes of

society, inasmuch as it manifests itself in the most varied spheres of life and activity — vocational, civic, personal, family, religious, scientific, etc., etc. — is it not evident that *we shall not be fulfilling our task* of developing the political consciousness of the workers if we do not *undertake* the organization of the *political exposure* of the autocracy in *all its aspects?* In order to carry on agitation around concrete instances of oppression, these instances must be exposed (as it is necessary to expose factory abuses in order to carry on economic agitation).

One might think this to be clear enough. It turns out, however, that it is only in words that "all" agree on the need to develop political consciousness, *in all its aspects* . It turns out that *Rabocheye Dyelo* , for example, far from tackling the task of organizing (or making a start in organizing) comprehensive political exposure, is even trying *to drag Iskra* , which has undertaken this task, *away from it* . Listen to the following: "The political struggle of the working class is merely [it is certainly not 'merely'] the most developed, wide, and effective form of economic struggle" (programme of *Rabocheye Dyelo* , published in issue No. 1, p. 3). "The Social-Democrats are now confronted with the task of lending the economic struggle itself, as far as possible, a political character" (Martynov, *Rabocheye Dyelo* , No. 10, p. 42). "The economic struggle is the most widely applicable means of drawing the masses into active political struggle" (resolution adopted by the Conference of the Union Abroad and "amendments" thereto, *Two Conferences* , pp. 11 and 17). As the reader will observe, all these theses permeate *Rabocheye Dyelo* from its very first number to the latest "Instructions to the Editors", and all of them evidently express a single view regarding political agitation and struggle. Let us examine this view from the standpoint of the opinion prevailing among all Economists, that political agitation must *follow* economic agitation. Is it true that, in general, [64] the economic struggle "is the most widely applicable means" of drawing the masses into the political struggle? It is entirely untrue. *Any and every* manifestation of police tyranny and autocratic outrage, not only in connection with the economic struggle, is not one whit less "widely applicable" as a means of "drawing in" the masses. The rural superintendents and the flogging of peasants, the corruption of the officials and the police treatment of the "common people" in the cities, the fight against the famine-stricken and the suppression of the popular striving

towards enlightenment and knowledge, the extortion of taxes and the persecution of the religious sects, the humiliating treatment of soldiers and the barrack methods in the treatment of the students and liberal intellectuals — do all these and a thousand other similar manifestations of tyranny, though not directly connected with the "economic" struggle, represent, in general, *less* "widely applicable" means and occasions for political agitation and for drawing the masses into the political struggle? The very opposite is true. Of the sum total of cases in which the workers suffer (either on their own account or on account of those closely connected with them) from tyranny, violence, and the lack of rights, undoubtedly only a small minority represent cases of police tyranny in the trade union struggle as such. Why then should we, beforehand, *restrict* the scope of political agitation by declaring only *one* of the means to be "the most widely applicable", when Social-Democrats must have, in addition, other, generally speaking, no less "widely applicable" means?

In the dim and distant past (a full year ago! *Rabocheye Dyelo* wrote: "The masses begin to understand immediate political demands after one strike, or at all events, after several", "as soon as the government sets the police and gendarmerie against them" [*August* (No. 7) 1900, p. 15]. This opportunist theory of stages has now been rejected by the Union Abroad, which makes a concession to us by declaring: "There is no need whatsoever to conduct political agitation right from the beginning, exclusively on an economic basis" (*Two Conferences* , p. 11). The Union's repudiation of part of its former errors will show the future historian of Russian Social-Democracy better than any number of lengthy arguments the depths to which our Economists have degraded socialism! But the Union Abroad must be very naive indeed to imagine that the abandonment of one form of restricting politics will induce us to agree to another form. Would it not be more logical to say, in this case too, that the economic struggle should be conducted on the widest possible basis, that it should always be utilized for political agitation, but that "there is no need whatever" to regard the economic struggle as the *most* widely applicable means of drawing the masses into active political struggle?

The Union Abroad attaches significance to the fact that it has substituted the phrase “most widely applicable means” for the phrase “the best means” contained in one of the resolutions of the Fourth Congress of the Jewish Workers’ Union (Bund). We confess that we find it difficult to say which of these resolutions is the better one. In our opinion they are *both worse* . Both the Union Abroad and the Bund fall into the error (partly, perhaps unconsciously, under the influence of tradition) of giving an Economist, trade-unionist interpretation to politics. Whether this is done by employing the word “best” or the words “most widely applicable” makes no essential difference whatever. Had the Union Abroad said that “political agitation on an economic basis” is the most widely applied (not “applicable”) means, it would have been right in regard to a certain period in the development of our Social-Democratic movement. It would have been right in regard to the *Economists* and to many (if not the majority) of the practical workers of 1898-1901; for these practical Economists *applied* political agitation (to the extent that they applied it at all) *almost exclusively on an economic basis* . Political agitation on such lines was recognized and, as we have seen, even recommended by Rabochaya Mysl and the Self-Emancipation Group. *Rabocheye Dyelo* should have *strongly condemned* the fact that the useful work of economic agitation was accompanied by the harmful restriction of the political struggle; instead, it declares the means most widely *applied (by the Economists)* to be the most widely *applicable* ! It is not surprising that when we call these people Economists, they can do nothing but pour every manner of abuse upon us; call us “mystifiers”, “disrupters”, “papal nuncios”, and “slanderers” [65] go complaining to the whole world that we have mortally offended them; and declare almost on oath that “not a single Social-Democratic organization is now tinged with Economism”. [66] Oh, those evil, slanderous politicians! They must have deliberately invented this Economism, out of sheer hatred of mankind, in order mortally to offend other people.

What concrete, real meaning attaches to Martynov’s words when he sets before Social-Democracy the task of “lending the economic struggle itself a political character”? The economic struggle is the collective struggle of the workers against their employers for better terms *in the sale of their labor-power* , for better living and working conditions. This struggle is

necessarily a trade union struggle, because working conditions differ greatly in different trades, and, consequently, the struggle *to improve* them can only be conducted on the basis of trade organizations (in the Western countries, through trade unions; in Russia, through temporary trade associations and through leaflets, etc.). Lending "the economic struggle itself a political character" means, therefore, striving to secure satisfaction of these trade demands, the improvement of working conditions in each separate trade by means of "legislative and administrative measures" (as Martynov puts it on the ensuing page of his article, p. 43). This is precisely what all workers' trade unions do and always have done. Read the works of the soundly scientific (and "soundly" opportunist) Mr. and Mrs. Webb and you will see that the British trade unions long ago recognized, and have long been carrying out, the task of "lending the economic struggle itself a political character"; they have long been fighting for the right to strike, for the removal of all legal hindrances to the cooperative and trade union movements, for laws to protect women and children, for the improvement of labor conditions by means of health and factory legislation, etc.

Thus, the pompous phrase about "lending the economic struggle *itself* a political character", which sounds so "terrifically" profound and revolutionary, serves as a screen to conceal what is in fact the traditional striving *to degrade* Social-Democratic politics to the level of trade union politics. Under the guise of rectifying the one-sidedness of *Iskra* , which, it is alleged, places "the revolutionizing of dogma higher than the revolutionizing of life", [67] we are presented with the *struggle for economic reforms* as if it were something entirely new. In point of fact, the phrase "lending the economic struggle itself a political character" means nothing more than the struggle for economic reforms. Martynov himself might have come to this simple conclusion, had he pondered over the significance of his own words. "Our Party," he says, training his heaviest guns on *Iskra* , "could and should have presented concrete demands to the government for legislative and administrative measures against economic exploitation, unemployment, famine, etc." (*Rabocheye Dyelo* , No. 10, pp. 42-43). Concrete demands for measures — does not this mean demands for social reforms? Again we ask the impartial reader: Are we slandering the *Rabocheye Dyelo* -ites (may I be forgiven for this awkward, currently used designation!) by calling them concealed Bernsteinians when, as their point

of *disagreement with Iskra* , they advance their thesis on the necessity of struggling for economic reforms?

Revolutionary Social-Democracy has always included the struggle for reforms as part of its activities. But it utilizes "economic" agitation for the purpose of presenting to the government, not only demands for all sorts of measures, but also (and primarily) the demand that it cease to be an autocratic government. Moreover, it considers it its duty to present this demand to the government on the basis, not of the economic struggle *alone* , but of all manifestations in general of public and political life. In a word, it subordinates the struggle for reforms, as the part to the whole, to the revolutionary struggle for freedom and for socialism. Martynov, however, resuscitates the theory of stages in a new form and strives to prescribe, as it were, an exclusively economic path of development for the political struggle. By advancing at this moment, when the revolutionary movement is on the upgrade, an alleged special "task" of struggling for reforms, he is dragging the Party backwards and is playing into the hands of both "Economist" and liberal opportunism.

To proceed. Shamefacedly hiding the struggle for reforms behind the pompous thesis of "lending the economic struggle itself a political character", Martynov advanced, as if it were a special point, *exclusively economic* (indeed, exclusively factory) *reforms* . As to the reason for his doing that, we do not know it. Carelessness, perhaps? Yet if he had in mind something else besides "factory" reforms, then the whole of his thesis, which we have cited, loses all sense. Perhaps he did it because he considers it possible and probable that the government will make "concessions" only in the economic sphere? [68] If so, then it is a strange delusion. Concessions are also possible and are made in the sphere of legislation concerning flogging, passports, land redemption payments, religious sects, the censorship, etc., etc. "Economic" concessions (or pseudo-concessions) are, of course, the cheapest and most advantageous from the government's point of view, because by these means it hopes to win the confidence of the working masses. For this very reason, we Social-Democrats *must not* under any circumstances or in any way, whatsoever, create grounds for the belief (or the misunderstanding) that we attach greater value to economic reforms,

or that we regard them as being particularly important, etc. “Such demands,” writes Martynov, speaking of the concrete demands for legislative and administrative measures referred to above, “would not be merely a hollow sound, because, promising certain palpable results, they might be actively supported by the working masses....” We are not Economists, oh no! We only cringe as slavishly before the “palpableness” of concrete results as do the Bernsteins, the Prokopoviches, the Struves , the R.M.s, and *tutti quanti!* We only wish to make it understood (together with Nartsis Tuporylov) that all which “does not promise palpable results ” is merely a “hollow sound”! We are only trying to argue as if the working masses were incapable (and had not already proved their capabilities, notwithstanding those who ascribe their own philistinism to them) of actively supporting *every* protest against the autocracy, even if it *promises absolutely no palpable results whatsoever!*

Let us take, for example, the very “measures” for the relief of unemployment and the famine that Martynov himself advances. *Rabocheye Dyelo* is engaged, judging by what it has promised, in drawing up and elaborating a programme of “concrete [in the form of bills?] demands for legislative and administrative measures”, “promising palpable results”, while *Iskra* , which “constantly places the revolutionizing of dogma higher than the revolutionizing of life”, has tried to explain the inseparable connection between unemployment and the whole capitalist system, has given warning that “famine is coming”, has exposed the police “fight against the famine-stricken”, and the outrageous “provisional penal servitude regulations”; and *Zarya* has published a special reprint, in the form of an agitational pamphlet, of a section of its “Review of Home Affairs”, dealing with the famine. [69] But good God! How “one-sided” were these incorrigibly narrow and orthodox doctrinaires, how deaf to the calls of “life itself”! Their articles contained — oh horror! — *not a single one* , can you imagine it? not a single “concrete demand” “promising palpable results”! Poor doctrinaires! They ought to be sent to Krichevsky and Martynov to be taught that tactics are a process of growth, of that which grows, etc., and that the economic struggle *itself* should be given a political character!

"In addition to its immediate revolutionary significance, the economic struggle of the workers against the employers and the government [" *economic* struggle against the government"!] also has this significance: it constantly brings home to the workers the fact that they have no political rights" (Martynov, p. 44). We quote this passage, not in order to repeat for the hundredth and thousandth time what has been said above, but in order to express particular thanks to Martynov for this excellent new formula: "the economic struggle of the workers against the employers and the government". What a gem! With what inimitable skill and mastery in eliminating all partial disagreements and shades of differences among Economists this clear and concise proposition expresses the *quintessence* of Economism, from summoning the workers "to the political struggle, which they carry on in the general interest, for the improvement of the conditions of all the workers", [70] continuing through the theory of stages, and ending in the resolution of the Conference on the "most widely applicable", etc. "Economic struggle against the government" is precisely trade-unionist politics, which is still very far from being Social-Democratic politics.

B. How Martynov Rendered Plekhanov More Profound

"What a large number of Social-Democratic Lomonosovs have appeared among us lately!" observed a comrade one day, having in mind the astonishing propensity of many who are inclined toward Economism to, arrive, "necessarily, by their own understanding", at great truths (e.g., that the economic struggle stimulates the workers to ponder over their lack of rights) and in doing so to ignore, with the supreme contempt of born geniuses, all that has been produced by the antecedent development of revolutionary thought and of the revolutionary movement. Lomonosov-Martynov is precisely such a born genius. We need but glance at his article "Urgent Questions" to see how by "his own understanding" he *arrives at* what was long ago said by Axelrod (of whom our Lomonosov, naturally, says not a word); how, for instance, he is *beginning* to understand that we cannot ignore the opposition of such or such strata of the bourgeoisie (

Rabocheye Dyelo , No. 9, pp. 61, 62, 71; compare this with Rabocheye Dyelo's Reply to Axelrod, pp. 22, 23-24), etc. But alas, he is only "arriving" and is only "beginning", not more than that, for so little has he understood Axelrod's ideas, that he talks about "the economic struggle against the employers and the government". For three years (1898-1901) *Rabocheye Dyelo* has tried hard to understand Axelrod, but has so far not understood him! Can one of the reasons be that Social-Democracy, "like mankind", always sets itself only tasks that can be achieved?

But the Lomonosovs are distinguished not only by their ignorance of many things (that would be but half misfortune!), but also by their unawareness of their own ignorance. Now this is a real misfortune; and it is this misfortune that prompts them without further ado to attempt to render Plekhanov "more profound".

"Much water," Lomonosov-Martynov says, "has flowed under the bridge since Plekhanov wrote his book (*Tasks of the Socialists in the Fight Against the Famine in Russia*). The Social-Democrats who for a decade led the economic struggle of the working class ... have failed as yet to lay down a broad theoretical basis for Party tactics. This question has now come to a head, and if we should wish to lay down such a theoretical basis, we should certainly have to deepen considerably the principles of tactics developed at one time by Plekhanov.... Our present definition of the distinction between propaganda and agitation would have to be different from Plekhanov's (Martynov has just quoted PIekhanov's words: "A propagandist presents many ideas to one or a few persons; an agitator presents only one or a few ideas, but he presents them to a mass of people.") By propaganda we would understand the revolutionary explanation of the present social system, entirely or in its partial manifestations, whether that be done in a form intelligible to individuals or to broad masses. By agitation, in the strict sense of the word (*sic* !), we would understand the call upon the masses to undertake definite, concrete actions and the promotion of the direct revolutionary intervention of the proletariat in social life."

We congratulate Russian-and international-Social-Democracy on having found, thanks to Martynov, a new terminology, more strict and more

profound. Hitherto we thought (with Plekhanov, and with all the leaders of the international working class movement) that the propagandist, dealing with, say, the question of unemployment, must explain the capitalistic nature of crises, the cause of their inevitability in modern society, the necessity for the transformation of this society into a socialist society, etc. In a word, he must present "many ideas" , so many, indeed, that they will be understood as an integral whole only by a (comparatively) few persons. The agitator, however, speaking on the same subject, will take as an illustration a fact that is most glaring and most widely known to his audience, say, the death of an unemployed worker's family from starvation, the growing impoverishment, etc., and, utilizing this fact, known to all, will direct his efforts to presenting a *single idea* to the " masses" , e.g., the senselessness of the contradiction between the increase of wealth and the increase of poverty; he will strive *to rouse* discontent and indignation among the masses against this crying injustice, leaving a more complete explanation of this contradiction to the propagandist. Consequently, the propagandist operates chiefly by means of the *printed* word; the agitator by means of the *spoken* word. The propagandist requires qualities different from those of the agitator. Kautsky and Lafargue, for example, we term propagandists; Bebel and Guesde we term agitators. To single out a third sphere, or third function, of practical activity, and to include in this function "the call upon the masses to undertake definite concrete actions" , is sheer nonsense, because the "call", as a single act, either naturally and inevitably supplements the theoretical treatise, propagandist pamphlet, and agitational speech, or represents a purely executive function. Let us take, for example, the struggle the German Social-Democrats are now waging against the corn duties. The theoreticians write research works on tariff policy, with the "call", say, to struggle for commercial treaties and for Free Trade. The propagandist does the same thing in the periodical press, and the agitator in public speeches. At the present time, the "concrete action" of the masses takes the form of signing petitions to the Reichstag against raising the corn duties. The call for this action comes indirectly from the theoreticians, the propagandists, and the agitators, and, directly, from the workers who take the petition lists to the factories and to private homes for the gathering of signatures. According to the "Martynov terminology", Kautsky and Bebel are both propagandists, while those who solicit the signatures are agitators. Isn't it clear?

The German example reminded me of the German word which, literally translated, means “Ballhorning”. Johann Ballhorn, a Leipzig publisher of the sixteenth century, published a children's reader in which, as was the custom, he introduced a drawing of a cock, but a cock without spurs and with a couple of eggs lying near it. On the cover he printed the legend, “ *Revised* edition by Johann Ballhorn”. Ever since then, the Germans describe any “revision” that is really a worsening as “ballhorning”. And one cannot help recalling Ballhorn upon seeing how the Martynovs try to render Plekhanov “more profound”.

Why did our Lomonosov “invent” this confusion? In order to illustrate how *Iskra* “devotes attention only to one side of the case, just as Pleklianov did a decade and a half ago” (39). “With *Iskra* , propagandist tasks force agitational tasks into the background, at least for the present” (52). If we translate this last proposition from the language of Martynov into ordinary human language (because mankind has not yet managed to learn the newly-invented terminology), we shall get the following: with *Iskra* , the tasks of political propaganda and political agitation force into the background the task of “presenting to the government concrete demands for legislative and administrative measures” that “promise certain palpable results” (or demands for social reforms, that is, if we are permitted once again to employ the old terminology of the old mankind not yet grown to Martynov’s level). We suggest that the reader compare this thesis with the following tirade:

“What also astonishes us in these programmes [the programmes advanced by revolutionary Social-Democrats] is their constant stress upon the benefits of workers’ activity in parliament (non-existent in Russia), though they completely ignore (thanks to their revolutionary nihilism) the importance of workers’ participation in the legislative manufacturers’ assemblies on factory affairs [which do exist in Russia] ... or at least the importance of workers’ participation in municipal bodies....”

The author of this tirade expresses in a somewhat more forthright and clearer manner the very idea which Lomonosov-Martynov discovered by

his own understanding. The author is R. M., in the " *Separate Supplement" to Rabochaya Mysl* (p. 15).

C. Political Exposures And "Training In Revolutionary Activity"

In advancing against *Iskra* his theory of "raising the activity of the working masses", Martynov actually betrayed an urge *to belittle* that activity, for he declared the very economic struggle before which all economists grovel to be the preferable, particularly important, and "most widely applicable" means of rousing this activity and its broadest field. This error is characteristic, precisely in that it is by no means peculiar to Martynov. In reality, it is possible to "raise the activity of the working masses" *only* when this activity *is not restricted* to "political agitation on an economic basis". A basic condition for the necessary expansion of political agitation is the organization of *comprehensive* political exposure. *In no way* except by means of such exposures *can* the masses be trained in political consciousness and revolutionary activity. Hence, activity of this kind is one of the most important functions of international Social-Democracy as a whole, for even political freedom does not in any way eliminate exposures; it merely shifts somewhat their sphere of direction. Thus, the German party is especially strengthening its positions and spreading its influence, thanks particularly to the untiring energy with which it is conducting its campaign of political exposure. Working-class consciousness cannot be genuine political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to *all* cases of tyranny, oppression, violence, and abuse, no matter *what class* is affected — unless they are trained, moreover, to respond from a Social-Democratic point of view and no other. The consciousness of the working masses cannot be genuine class-consciousness, unless the workers learn, from concrete, and above all from topical, political facts and events to observe *every* other social class in *all* the manifestations of its intellectual, ethical, and political life; unless they learn to apply in practice the materialist analysis and the materialist estimate of *all* aspects of the life and activity of *all* classes, strata, and groups of the population. Those who concentrate the attention, observation, and consciousness of the working class exclusively, or even mainly, upon itself alone are not Social-

Democrats; for the self-knowledge of the working class is indissolubly bound up, not solely with a fully clear theoretical understanding — or rather, not so much with the theoretical, as with the practical, understanding — of the relationships between *all* the various classes of modern society, acquired through the experience of political life. For this reason the conception of the economic struggle as the most widely applicable means of drawing the masses into the political movement, which our Economists preach, is so extremely harmful and reactionary in its practical significance. In order to become a Social-Democrat, the worker must have a clear picture in his mind of the economic nature and the social and political features of the landlord and the priest, the high state official and the peasant, the student and the vagabond; he must know their strong and weak points; he must grasp the meaning of all the catchwords and sophisms by which each class and each stratum *camouflages* its selfish strivings and its real "inner workings"; he must understand what interests are reflected by certain institutions and certain laws and how they are reflected. But this "clear picture" cannot be obtained from any book. It can be obtained only from living examples and from exposures that follow close upon what is going on about us at a given moment; upon what is being discussed, in whispers perhaps, by each one in his own way; upon what finds expression in such and such events, in such and such statistics, in such and such court sentences, etc., etc. These comprehensive political exposures are an essential and *fundamental* condition for training the masses in revolutionary activity.

Why do the Russian workers still manifest little revolutionary activity in response to the brutal treatment of the people by the police, the persecution of religious sects, the flogging of peasants, the outrageous censorship, the torture of soldiers, the persecution of the most innocent cultural undertakings, etc.? Is it because the "economic struggle" does not "stimulate" them to this, because such activity does not "promise palpable results", because it produces little that is "positive"? To adopt such an opinion, we repeat, is merely to direct the charge where it does not belong, to blame the working masses for one's own philistinism (or Bernsteinism). We must blame ourselves, our lagging behind the mass movement, for still being unable to organize sufficiently wide, striking, and rapid exposures of all the shameful outrages. When we do that (and we must and can do it), the

most backward worker will understand, *or will feel* , that the students and religious sects, the peasants and the authors are being abused and outraged by those same dark forces that are oppressing and crushing him at every step of his life. Feeling that, he himself will be filled with an irresistible desire to react, and he will know how to hoot the censors one day, on another day to demonstrate outside the house of a governor who has brutally suppressed a peasant uprising, on still another day to teach a lesson to the gendarmes in surplices who are doing the work of the Holy Inquisition, etc. As yet we have done very little, almost nothing, *to bring* before the working masses prompt exposures on all possible issues. Many of us as yet do not recognize this as our *bounden duty* but trail spontaneously in the wake of the "drab everyday struggle", in the narrow confines of factory life. Under such circumstances to say that " *Iskra* displays a tendency to minimize the significance of the forward march of the drab everyday struggle in comparison with the propaganda of brilliant and complete ideas" (Martynov, op. cit., p. 61), means to drag the Party back, to defend and glorify our unpreparedness and backwardness.

As for calling the masses to action, that will come of itself as soon as energetic political agitation, live and striking exposures come into play. To catch some criminal red-handed and immediately to brand him publicly in all places is of itself far more effective than any number of "calls"; the effect very often is such as will make it impossible to tell exactly who it was that "called" upon the masses and who suggested this or that plan of demonstration, etc. Calls for action, not in the general, but in the concrete, sense of the term can be made only at the place of action; only those who themselves go into action, and do so immediately, can sound such calls. Our business as Social-Democratic publicists is to deepen, expand, and intensify political exposures and political agitation.

A word in passing about "calls to action". The *only newspaper* which *prior* to the spring events *called upon* the workers to intervene actively in a matter that certainly did not *promise* any *palpable results* whatever for the workers, i.e., the drafting of the students into the army, was *Iskra* . Immediately after the publication of the order of January 11, on "drafting the 183 students into the army", *Iskra* published an article on the matter (in

its February issue, No. 2), [71] and, *before* any demonstration was begun, forthwith *called upon* "the workers to go to the aid of the students", called upon the "people" openly to take up the government's arrogant challenge. We ask: how is the remarkable fact to be explained that although Martynov talks so much about "calls to action", and even suggests "calls to action" as a special form of activity, he said not a word about *this* call? After this, was it not sheer philistinism on Martynov's part to allege that *Iskra* was *one-sided* because it did not issue sufficient "calls" to struggle for demands "promising palpable results"?

Our Economists, including *Rabocheye Dyelo* , were successful because they adapted themselves to the backward workers. But the Social-Democratic worker, the revolutionary worker (and the number of such workers is growing) will indignantly reject all this talk about struggle for demands "promising palpable results", etc., because he will understand that this is only a variation of the old song about adding a kopek to the ruble. Such a worker will say to his counselors from *Rabochaya Mysl* and *Rabocheye Dyelo* : you are making yourselves busy in vain, gentlemen, and shirking your proper duties, by meddling with such excessive zeal in a job that we can very well manage ourselves. There is nothing clever in your assertion that the Social-Democrats' task is to lend the economic struggle itself a political character; that is only the beginning, it is not the main task of the Social-Democrats. For all over the world, including Russia, *the police themselves often take the initiative in lending* the economic struggle a political character, and the workers themselves learn to understand whom the government supports. [72] The "economic struggle of the workers against the employers and the government", about which you make as much fuss as if you had discovered a new America, is being waged in all parts of Russia, even the most remote, by the workers themselves who have heard about strikes, but who have heard almost nothing about socialism. The "activity" you want to stimulate among us workers, by advancing concrete demands that promise palpable results, we are already displaying and in our everyday, limited trade union work we put forward these concrete demands, very often without any assistance whatsoever from the intellectuals. But *such* activity is not enough for us; we are not children to be fed on the thin gruel of "economic" politics alone; we want to know everything that others know, we want to learn the details of *all* aspects of political life and to take

part *actively* in every single political event. In order that we may do this, the intellectuals must talk to us less of what we already know. [73] and tell us more about what we do not yet know and what we can never learn from our factory and "economic" experience, namely, political knowledge. You intellectuals can acquire this knowledge, and it is your *duty* to bring it to us in a hundred- and a thousand-fold greater measure than you have done up to now; and you must bring it to us, not only in the form of discussions, pamphlets, and articles (which very often — pardon our frankness — are rather dull), but precisely in the form of vivid *exposures* of what our government and our governing classes are doing at this very moment in all spheres of life. Devote more zeal to carrying out this duty and talk less about " *raising the activity of the working masses* ". We are far more active than you think, and we are quite able to support, by open street fighting, even demands that do not promise any "palpable results" whatsoever. It is not for you to "raise" our activity, because *activity is precisely the thing you yourselves lack.* Bow less in subservience to spontaneity, and think more about raising your own activity, gentlemen!

D. What Is There In Common Between Economism and Terrorism?

In the last footnote we cited the opinion of an Economist and of a non-Social-Democratic terrorist, who showed themselves to be accidentally in agreement. Speaking generally, however, there is not an accidental, but a necessary, inherent connection between the two, of which we shall have need to speak later, and which must be mentioned here in connection with the question of education for revolutionary activity. The Economists and the root, namely, *subservience to spontaneity* , with which we dealt in the preceding chapter as a general phenomenon and which we shall now examine in relation to its effect upon political activity and the political struggle. At first sight, our assertion may appear paradoxical, so great is the difference between those who stress the "drab everyday struggle" and those who call for the most self sacrificing struggle of individuals. But this is no paradox. The Economists and the terrorists merely bow to different poles of spontaneity; the Economists bow to the spontaneity of "the labor movement pure and simple", while the terrorists bow to the spontaneity of the

passionate indignation of intellectuals, who lack the ability or opportunity to connect the revolutionary struggle and the working-class movement into an integral whole. It is difficult indeed for those who have lost their belief, or who have never believed, that this is possible, to find some outlet for their indignation and revolutionary energy other than terror. Thus, both forms of subservience to spontaneity we have mentioned are nothing but *the beginning of the implementation* of the notorious *Credo* programme: Let the workers wage their "economic struggle against the employers and the government" (we apologize to the author of the *Credo* for expressing her views in Martynov's words. We think we have a right to do so since the *Credo* , too, says that in the economic struggle the workers "come up against the political regime and let the intellectuals conduct the political struggle by their own efforts — with the aid of terror, of course! This is an absolutely logical and inevitable *conclusion* which must be insisted on — *even though those* who are beginning to carry out this programme *do not themselves realize* that it is inevitable. Political activity has its logic quite apart from the consciousness of those who, with the best intentions, call either for terror or for lending the economic struggle itself a political character. The road to hell is paved with good intentions, and, in this case, good intentions cannot save one from being spontaneously drawn "along the line of least resistance", along the line of the *purely bourgeois Credo* programme. Surely it is no accident either that many Russian liberals — avowed liberals and liberals that wear the mask of Marxism — whole-heartedly sympathize with terror and try to foster the terrorist moods that have surged up in the present time.

The formation of the Revolutionary-Socialist *Svoboda* Group which set itself the aim of helping the working-class movement in every possible way, but which included in its *programme* terror, and emancipation, so to speak, from Social-Democracy — once again confirmed the remarkable perspicacity of P. B. Axelrod, who *literally foretold* these results of Social-Democratic waverings *as far back as the end of 1897 (Present Tasks and Tactics)* , when he outlined his famous "two perspectives". All the subsequent disputes and disagreements among Russian Social-Democrats are contained, like a plant in the seed, in these two perspectives. [74]

From this point of view it also becomes clear why *Rabocheye Dyelo* , unable to withstand the spontaneity of Economism, has likewise been unable to withstand the spontaneity of terrorism. It is highly interesting to note here the specific arguments that *Svoboda* has advanced in defense of terrorism. It "completely denies" the deterrent role of terrorism (*The Regeneration of Revolutionism* , p. 64), but instead stresses its "excitative significance". This is characteristic, first, as representing one of the stages of the breakup and decline of the traditional (pre-Social-Democratic) cycle of ideas which insisted upon terrorism. The admission that the government cannot now be "terrified" and hence disrupted, by terror, is tantamount to a complete condemnation of terror as a system of struggle, as a sphere of activity sanctioned by the programme. Secondly, it is still more characteristic as an example of the failure to understand our immediate tasks in regard to "education for revolutionary activity". *Svoboda* advocates terror as a means of "exciting" the working-class movement and of giving it a "strong impetus". It is difficult to imagine an argument that more thoroughly disproves itself. Are there not enough outrages committed in Russian life without special "excitants" having to be invented? On the other hand, is it not obvious that those who are not, and cannot be, roused to excitement even by Russian tyranny will stand by "twiddling their thumbs" and watch a handful of terrorists engaged in single combat with the government? The fact is that the working masses are roused to a high pitch of excitement by the social evils in Russian life, but we are unable to gather, if one may so put it, and concentrate all these drops and streamlets of popular resentment that are brought forth to a far larger extent than we imagine by the conditions of Russian life, and that must be combined into a single gigantic torrent. That this can be accomplished is irrefutably proved by the enormous growth of the working-class movement and the eagerness, noted above, with which the workers clamor for political literature. On the other hand, calls for terror and calls to lend the economic struggle itself a political character are merely two different forms of *evading* the most pressing duty now resting upon Russian revolutionaries, namely, the organization of comprehensive political agitation. *Svoboda* desires to *substitute* terror for agitation, openly admitting that "as soon as intensified and strenuous agitation is begun among the masses the excitative function of terror will be ended" (*The Regeneration of Revolutionism* , p. 68). This

proves precisely that both the terrorists and the Economists *underestimate* the revolutionary activity of the masses, despite the striking evidence of the events that took place in the spring, [75] and whereas the one group goes out in search of artificial "excitants", the other talks about "concrete demands". But both fail to devote sufficient attention to the development of *their own activity* in political agitation and in the organization of political exposures. And no other work can serve as a *substitute* for this task either at the present time or at any other.

E. The Working Class As Vanguard Fighter For Democracy

We have seen that the conduct of the broadest political agitation and, consequently, of all-sided political exposures is an absolutely necessary and a *paramount* task of our activity, if this activity is to be truly Social-Democratic. However, we arrived at this conclusion solely on the grounds of the pressing needs of the working class for political knowledge and political training. But such a presentation of the question is too narrow, for it ignores the general democratic tasks of Social-Democracy, in particular of present-day Russian Social-Democracy. In order to explain the point more concretely we shall approach the subject from an aspect that is "nearest" to the Economist, namely, from the practical aspect. "Everyone agrees" that it is necessary to develop the political consciousness of the working class. The question is, *how* that is to be done and what is required to do it. The economic struggle merely "impels" the workers to realize the government's attitude towards the working class. Consequently, *however much we may try* to "lend the economic, struggle itself a political character", *we shall never be able* to develop the political consciousness of the workers (to the level of Social-Democratic political consciousness) by keeping within the framework of the economic struggle, for *that framework is too narrow.* The Martynov formula has some value for us, not because it illustrates Martynov's aptitude for confusing things, but because it pointedly expresses the basic error that all the Economists commit, namely, their conviction that it is possible to develop the class political consciousness of the workers *from within* , so to speak, from their economic struggle, i.e., by making this struggle the exclusive (or, at least, the main) starting-point, by making it the

exclusive (or, at least, the main) basis. Such a view is radically wrong. Piqued by our polemics against them, the Economists refuse to ponder deeply over the origins of these disagreements, with the result that we simply cannot understand one another. It is as if we spoke in different tongues.

Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers *only from without* , that is, only from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships of *all* classes and strata to the state and the government, the sphere of the interrelations between *all* classes. For that reason, the reply to the question as to what must be done to bring political knowledge to the workers cannot be merely the answer with which, in the majority of cases, the practical workers, especially those inclined towards Economism, mostly content themselves, namely: "To go among the workers." To bring political knowledge to the *workers* the Social Democrats must *go among all classes of the population* ; they must dispatch units of their army *in all directions* .

We deliberately select this blunt formula, we deliberately express ourselves in this sharply simplified manner, not because we desire to indulge in paradoxes, but in order to "impel" the Economists to a realization of their tasks which they unpardonably ignore, to suggest to them strongly the difference between trade-unionist and Social-Democratic politics, which they refuse to understand. We therefore beg the reader not to get wrought up, but to hear us patiently to the end.

Let us take the type of Social-Democratic study circle that has become most widespread in the past few years and examine its work. It has "contacts with the workers" and rests content with this, issuing leaflets in which abuses in the factories, the government's partiality towards the capitalists, and the tyranny of the police are strongly condemned. At workers' meetings the discussions never, or rarely ever, go beyond the limits of these subjects. Extremely rare are the lectures and discussions held on the history of the revolutionary movement, on questions of the government's home and foreign policy, on questions of the economic evolution of Russia and of

Europe, on the position of the various classes in modern society, etc. As to systematically acquiring and extending contact with other classes of society, no one even dreams of that. In fact, the ideal leader, as the majority of the members of such circles picture him, is something far more in the nature of a trade union secretary than a socialist political leader. For the secretary of any, say English, trade union always helps the workers to carry on the economic struggle, he helps them to expose factory abuses, explains the injustice of the laws and of measures that hamper the freedom to strike and to picket (i. e., to warn all and sundry that a strike is proceeding at a certain factory), explains the partiality of arbitration court judges who belong to the bourgeois classes, etc., etc. In a word, every trade union secretary conducts and helps to conduct "the economic struggle against the employers and the government". It cannot be too strongly maintained that *this is still not* Social-Democracy, that the Social-Democrat's ideal should not be the trade union secretary, but *the tribune of the people* , who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalize all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth *before all* his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat. Compare, for example, a leader like Robert Knight (the well-known secretary and leader of the Boiler-Makers' Society, one of the most powerful trade unions in England), with Wilhelm Liebknecht, and try to apply to them the contrasts that Martynov draws in his controversy with *Iskra* . You will see — I am running through Martynov's article — that Robert Knight engaged more in "calling the masses to certain concrete actions" (Martynov, op. cit., p. 39), while Willielin Liebknecht engaged more in "the revolutionary elucidation of the whole of the present system or partial manifestations of it" (38-39); that Robert Knight "formulated the immediate demands of the proletariat and indicated the means by which they can be achieved" (41), whereas Wilhelm Liebknecht, while doing this, did not hold back from "simultaneously guiding the activities of various opposition strata" , "dictating a positive programme of action for them" [76] (41); that Robert Knight strove "as far as possible to lend the economic struggle itself a political character" (42)

and was excellently able "to submit to the government concrete demands promising certain palpable results" (43), whereas Liebknecht engaged to a much greater degree in "one-sided" "exposures" (40); that Robert Knight attached more significance to the "forward march of the drab everyday struggle" (61), whereas Liebknecht attached more significance to the "propaganda of brilliant and completed ideas" (61); that Liebknecht converted the paper he was directing into "an organ of revolutionary opposition that exposed the state of affairs in our country, particularly the political state of affairs, insofar as it affected the interests of the most varied strata of the population" (63), whereas Robert Knight "worked for the cause of the working class in close organic connection with the proletarian struggle" (63) — if by "close and organic connection" is meant the subservience to spontaneity which we examined above, by taking the examples of Krichevsky and Martynov — and "restricted the sphere of his influence", convinced, of course, as is Martynov, that "by doing so he deepened that influence" (63). In a word, you will see that *de facto* Martynov reduces Social-Democracy to the level of trade-unionism, though he does so, of course, not because he does not desire the good of Social-Democracy, but simply because he is a little too much in a hurry to render Plekhanov more profound, instead of taking the trouble to understand him.

Let us return, however, to our theses. We said that a Social Democrat, if he really believes it necessary to comprehensively develop the political consciousness of the proletariat, must "go among all classes of the population". This gives rise to the questions: how is this to be done? have we enough forces to do this? is there a basis for such work among all the other classes? will this not mean a retreat, or lead to a retreat, from the class point of view? Let us deal with these questions.

We must "go among all classes of the population" as theoreticians, as propagandists, as agitators, and as organizers. Noone doubts that the theoretical work of Social-Democrats should aim at studying all the specific features of the social and political condition of the various classes. But extremely little is done in this direction as compared with the work that is done in studying the specific features of factory life. In the committees and study circles, one can meet people who are immersed in the study even of

some special branch of the metal industry; but one can hardly ever find members of organizations (obliged, as often happens, for some reason or other to give up practical work) who are especially engaged in gathering material on some pressing question of social and political life in our country which could serve as a means for conducting Social-Democratic work among other strata of the population. In dwelling upon the fact that the majority of the present-day leaders of the working-class movement lack training, we cannot refrain from mentioning training in this respect also, for it too is bound up with the Economist conception of "close organic connection with the proletarian struggle". The principal thing, of course, is *propaganda* and *agitation* among all strata of the people. The work of the West European Social-Democrat is, in this respect, facilitated by the public meetings and rallies which *all* are free to attend, and by the fact that in parliament he addresses the representatives of *all* classes. We have neither a parliament nor freedom of assembly; nevertheless, we are able to arrange meetings of workers who desire to listen to *a Social-Democrat* . We must also find ways and means of calling meetings of representatives of all social classes that desire to listen to *a democrat* ; for he is no Social-Democrat who forgets in practice that "the Communists support every revolutionary movement", that we are obliged for that reason to expound and emphasize *general democratic tasks before the whole people* , without for a moment concealing our socialist convictions. He is no Social-Democrat who forgets in practice his obligation to be *ahead of all* in raising, accentuating, and solving *every* general democratic question.

"But everyone agrees with this!" the impatient reader will exclaim, and the new instructions adopted by the last conference of the Union Abroad for the Editorial Board of *Rabocheye Dyelo* definitely say: "All events of social and political life that affect the proletariat either directly as a special class or as *the vanguard of all the revolutionary forces in the struggle for freedom* should serve as subjects for political propaganda and agitation" (*Two Conferences* , p. 17, our italics). Yes, these are very true and very good words, and we would be fully satisfied if *Rabocheye Dyelo* understood them *and if he refrained from saying in the next breath things that contradict them* . For it is not enough to call ourselves the "vanguard", the advanced contingent; we must act in such a way that all the other contingents recognize and are obliged to admit that we are marching in the

vanguard. And we ask the reader: Are the representatives of the other "contingents" such fools as to take our word for it when we say that we are the "vanguard"? just picture to yourselves the following: a Social-Democrat comes to the "contingent" of Russian educated radicals, or liberal constitutionalists, and says, We are the vanguard; "the task confronting us now is, as far as possible, to lend the economic struggle itself a political character". The radical, or constitutionalist, if he is at all intelligent (and there are many intelligent men among Russian radicals and constitutionalists), would only smile at such a speech and would say (to himself, of course, for in the majority of cases he is an experienced diplomat): "Your 'vanguard' must be made up of simpletons. They do not even understand that it is our task, the task of the progressive representatives of bourgeois democracy to lend the workers' economic struggle *itself* a political character. Why, we too, like the West-European bourgeois, want to draw the workers into politics, *but only into trade-unionist, not into Social-Democratic politics.* Trade-unionist politics of the working class is precisely *bourgeois politics* of the working class, and this 'vanguard's' formulation of its task is the formulation of trade-unionist politics! Let them call themselves Social-Democrats to their heart's content, I am not a child to get excited over a label. But they must not fall under the influence of those pernicious orthodox doctrinaires, let them allow 'freedom of criticism' to those who unconsciously are driving Social-Democracy into trade-unionist channels."

And the faint smile of our constitutionalist will turn into Homeric laughter when he learns that the Social-Democrats who talk of Social-Democracy as the vanguard, today, when spontaneity almost completely dominates our movement, fear nothing so much as "belittling the spontaneous element", as "underestimating the significance of the forward movement of the drab everyday struggle, as compared with the propaganda of brilliant and completed ideas", etc., etc.! A "vanguard" which fears that consciousness will outstrip spontaneity, which fears to put forward a bold "plan" that would compel general recognition even among those who differ with us. Are they not confusing "vanguard" with "rearguard"?

Indeed, let us examine the following piece of reasoning by Martynov. On page 40 he says that *Iskra* is one-sided in its tactics of exposing abuses, that "however much we may spread distrust and hatred of the government, we shall not achieve our aim until we have succeeded in developing sufficient active social energy for its overthrow". This, it may be said parenthetically, is the familiar solicitude for the activation of the masses, with a simultaneous striving to restrict one's own activity. But that is not the main point at the moment. Martynov speaks here, accordingly, of *revolutionary* energy ("for overthrowing"). And what conclusion does he arrive at? Since in ordinary times various social strata inevitably march separately, "it is therefore, clear that we Social-Democrats cannot simultaneously guide the activities of various opposition strata, we cannot dictate to them a positive programme of action, we cannot point out to them in what manner they should wage a day-to-day struggle for their interests.... The liberal strata will themselves take care of the active struggle for their immediate interests, the struggle that will bring them face to face with our political regime" (p. 41). Thus, having begun with talk about revolutionary energy, about the active struggle for the overthrow of the autocracy, Martynov immediately turns toward trade union energy and active struggle for immediate interests! It goes without saying that we cannot guide the struggle of the students, liberals, etc., for their "immediate interests"; but this was not the point at issue, most worthy Economist! The point we were discussing was the possible and necessary participation of various social strata in the overthrow of the autocracy; and not only are we *able* , but it is our bounden duty, to guide *these* "activities of the various opposition strata", if we desire to be the "vanguard". Not only will our students and liberals, etc., themselves take care of "the struggle that brings them face to face with our political regime"; the police and the officials of the autocratic government will see to this first and foremost. But if "we" desire to be front-rank democrats, we must make it our concern to *direct* the thoughts of those who are dissatisfied only with conditions at the university, or in the Zemstvo, etc., to the idea that the entire political system is worthless. *We* must take upon ourselves the task of organizing an all-round political struggle under the leadership of our Party in such a manner as to make it possible for all oppositional strata to render their fullest support to the struggle and to our Party. *We* must train our Social-Democratic practical

workers to become political leaders, able to guide all the manifestations of this all-round struggle, able at the right time to "dictate a positive programme of action" for the aroused students, the discontented Zemstvo people, the incensed religious sects, the offended elementary school teachers, etc., etc. For that reason, Martynov's assertion that "with regard to these, we can function *merely in the negative* role of exposers of abuses... we can only dissipate their hopes in various government commissions " *is completely false* (our italics). By saying this, Martynov shows that he *absolutely fails to understand* the role that the revolutionary "vanguard" must really play. If the reader bears this in mind, he will be clear as to the *real meaning* of Martynov's concluding remarks: " *Iskra* is the organ of the revolutionary opposition which exposes the state of affairs in our country, particularly the political state of affairs, insofar as it affects the interests of the most varied strata of the population. We, however, work and will continue to work for the cause of the working class in close organic contact with the proletarian struggle. By restricting the sphere of our active influence we deepen that influence" (63). The true sense of this conclusion is as follows: *Iskra* desires *to elevate* the trade-unionist politics of the working class (to which, through misconception, through lack of training, or through conviction, our practical workers frequently confine themselves) to the level of Social-Democratic politics. *Rabocheye Dyelo* , however, desires *to degrade* Social-Democratic politics to trade-unionist politics. Moreover, it assures the world that the two positions are "entirely compatible within the common cause" (63). *0, sancta simplicitas!*

To proceed. Do we have sufficient forces to direct our propaganda and agitation among *all* social classes? Most certainly. Our Economists, who are frequently inclined to deny this, lose sight of the gigantic progress our movement has made from (approximately) 1894 to 1901. Like real "tail-enders" they often go on living in the bygone stages of the movement's inception. In the earlier period , indeed, we had astonishingly few forces, and it was perfectly natural and legitimate then to devote ourselves exclusively to activities among the workers and to severely condemn any deviation from this course. The entire task then was to consolidate our position in the working class. At the present time, however, gigantic forces have been attracted to the movement. The best representatives of the younger generation of the educated classes are coming over to us.

Everywhere in the provinces there are people, resident there by dint of circumstance, who have taken part in the movement in the past or who desire to do so now and who, are gravitating towards Social-Democracy (whereas in 1894 one could count the Social-Democrats on the fingers of one's hand). A basic political and organizational shortcoming of our movement is our *inability* to utilize all these forces and give them appropriate work (we shall deal with this more fully in the next chapter). The overwhelming majority of these forces entirely lack the opportunity of "going among the workers", so that there are no grounds for fearing that we shall divert forces from our main work. In order to be able to provide the workers with real, comprehensive, and live political knowledge, we must have "our own people", Social-Democrats, everywhere, among all social strata, and in all positions from which we can learn the inner springs of our state mechanism. Such people are required, not only for propaganda and agitation, but in a still larger measure for organization.

Is there a basis for activity among all classes of the population? Whoever doubts this lags in his consciousness behind the spontaneous awakening of the masses. The working-class movement has aroused and is continuing to arouse discontent in some, hopes of support for the opposition in others, and in still others the realization that the autocracy is unbearable and must inevitably fall. We would be "politicians " and Social-Democrats in name only (as all too often happens in reality), if we failed to realize that our task is to utilize every manifestation of discontent, and to gather and turn to the best account, every protest, however small. This is quite apart from the fact that the millions of the laboring peasantry, handicraftsmen , petty artisans, etc., would always listen eagerly to the speech of any Social-Democrat who is at all qualified. Indeed, is there a single social class in which there are no individuals, groups, or circles that are discontented with the lack of rights and with tyranny and, therefore, accessible to the propaganda of Social-Democrats as the spokesmen of the most pressing general democratic needs? To those who desire to have a clear idea of what the political agitation of a Social-Democrat among *all* classes and strata of the population should be like, we would point to *political exposures* in the broad sense of the word as the principal (but, of course, not the sole) form of this agitation.

"We must arouse in every section of the population that is at all politically conscious a passion for *political* exposure," I wrote in my article "Where To Begin" [*Iskra* , May (No. 4), 1901], with which I shall deal in greater detail later. "We must not be discouraged by the fact that the voice of political exposure today is so feeble, timid, and infrequent. This is not because of a wholesale submission to police despotism, but because those who are able and ready to make exposures have no tribune from which to speak, no eager and encouraging audience, they do not see anywhere among the people that force to which it would be worth while directing their complaint against the 'omnipotent' Russian Government.... We are now in a position to provide a tribune for the nation-wide exposure of the tsarist government, and it is our duty to do this. That tribune must be a Social-Democratic newspaper." [77]

The ideal audience for political exposure is the working class, which is first and foremost in need of all-round and live political knowledge, and is most capable of converting this knowledge into active struggle, even when that struggle does not promise "palpable results". A tribune for *nation-wide* exposures can be only an all-Russia newspaper. "Without a political organ, a political movement deserving that name is inconceivable in the Europe of today"; in this respect Russia must undoubtedly be included in present-day Europe. The press long ago became a power in our country, otherwise the government would not spend tens of thousands of rubles to bribe it and to subsidize the Katkovs and Meshcherskys. And it is no novelty in autocratic Russia for the underground press to break through the wall of censorship and *compel* the legal and conservative press to speak openly of it. This was the case in the seventies and even in the fifties. How much broader and deeper are the sections of the people willing to read the illegal underground press, and to learn from it "how to live and how to die", to use the expression of a worker who sent a letter to *Iskra* (No. 7). [78] Political exposures are as much a declaration of war against the *government* as economic exposures are a declaration of war against the factory owners. The moral significance of this declaration of war will be all the greater, the wider and more powerful the campaign of exposure will be and the more numerous and determined the social *class* that has *declared war in order to begin the war* . Hence, political exposures in themselves serve as a

powerful instrument for *disintegrating* the system we oppose, as a means for diverting from the enemy his casual or temporary allies, as a means for spreading hostility and distrust among the permanent partners of the autocracy.

In our time only a party that will *organize* really *nation-wide* exposures can become the vanguard of the revolutionary forces. The word "nation-wide" has a very profound meaning. The overwhelming majority of the non-working- class exposers (be it remembered that in order to become the vanguard, we must attract other classes) are sober politicians and level-headed men of affairs. They know perfectly well how dangerous it is to "complain" even against a minor official, let alone against the "omnipotent" Russian Government. And they will come *to us* with their complaints only when they see that these complaints can really have an effect, and that we represent *a political force* . In order to become such a force in the eyes of outsiders, much persistent and stubborn work is required *to raise* our own consciousness, initiative, and energy.. To accomplish this it is not enough to attach a "vanguard" label to rearguard theory and practice.

But if we have to undertake the organization of a really nationwide exposure of the government, in what way will then the class character of our movement be expressed? — the overzealous advocate of "close organic contact with the proletarian struggle" will ask us, as indeed he does. The reply is manifold: we Social-Democrats will organize these nation-wide exposures; all questions raised by the agitation will he explained in a consistently Social-Democratic spirit, without any concessions to deliberate or non-deliberate distortions of Marxism; the all-round political agitation will be conducted by a party which unites into one inseparable whole the assault on the government in the name of the entire people, the revolutionary training of the proletariat, and the safeguarding of its political independence, the guidance of the economic struggle of the working class, and the utilization of all its spontaneous conflicts with its exploiters which rouse and bring into our camp increasing numbers of the proletariat.

But a most characteristic feature of Economism is its failure to understand this connection, more, this identity of the most pressing need of the

proletariat (a comprehensive political education through the medium of political agitation and political exposures) with the need of the general democratic movement. This lack of understanding is expressed, not only in " Martynovite " phrases, but in the references to a supposedly class point of view identical in meaning with these phrases. Thus, the authors of the Economist letter in *Iskra* , No. 12, state: [79] "This basic drawback of *Iskra* (overestimation of ideology) is also the cause of its inconsistency on the question of the attitude of Social-Democracy to the various social classes and tendencies. By theoretical reasoning (not by "the growth of Party tasks, which grow together with the Party"), *Iskra* solved the problem of the immediate transition to the struggle against absolutism. In all probability it senses the difficulty of such a task for the workers under the present state of affairs (not only senses, but knows full well that this task appears less difficult to the workers than to the Economist intellectuals with their nursemaid concern, for the workers are prepared to fight even for demands which, to use the language of the never-to-be-forgotten Martynov, do not "promise palpable results") but lacking the patience to wait until the workers will have gathered sufficient forces for this struggle, *Iskra* begins to seek allies in the ranks of the liberals and intellectuals". . . .

Yes, we have indeed lost all "patience" "waiting" for the blessed time, long promised to us by diverse "conciliators", when the Economists will have stopped charging the workers with their own backwardness and justifying their own lack of energy with allegations that the workers lack strength. We ask our Economists: What do they mean by "the gathering of working class strength for the struggle"? Is it not evident that this means the political training of the workers, so that all the aspects of our vile autocracy are revealed to them? And is it not clear that *precisely for this work* we need "allies in the ranks of the liberals and intellectuals", who are prepared to join us in the exposure of the political attack on the Zemstvos, on the teachers, on the statisticians, on the students, etc.? Is this surprisingly "intricate mechanism" really so difficult to understand? Has not P. B. Axelrod constantly repeated since 1897 that "the task before the Russian Social-Democrats of acquiring adherents and direct and indirect allies among the non-proletarian classes will be solved principally and primarily by the character of the propagandist activities conducted among the proletariat itself"? But the Martynovs and the other Economists continue to

imagine that “by economic struggle against the employers and the government” the workers must *first* gather strength (for trade-unionist politics) and *then* “go over” — we presume from trade-unionist “training for activity” to Social-Democratic activity!

“...In this quest,” continue the Economists, “ *Iskra* not infrequently departs from the class point of view, obscures class antagonisms, and puts into the forefront the common nature of the discontent with the government, although the causes and the degree of the discontent vary considerably among the ’allies’. Such, for example, is *Iskra* ’s attitude towards the Zemstvo . . .” *Iskra* , it is alleged, “promises the nobles that are dissatisfied with the government’s sops the assistance of the working class, but it does not say a word about the class antagonism that exists between these social strata.” If the reader will turn to the article “The Autocracy and the Zemstvo” (*Iskra* , Nos. 2 and 4), to which, *in all probability* , the authors of the letter refer, he will find that they [80] deal with the attitude of the *government* towards the “mild agitation of the bureaucratic Zemstvo, which is based on the social-estates”, and towards the “independent activity of even the propertied classes”. The article states that the workers cannot look on indifferently while the government is waging a struggle against the Zemstvo, and the Zemstvos are called upon to stop making mild speeches and to speak firmly and resolutely when revolutionary Social-Democracy confronts the government in all its strength. What the authors of the letter do not agree with here is not clear. Do they think that the workers will “not understand” the phrases “propertied classes” and “bureaucratic Zemstvo based on the social-estates”? Do they think that *urging* the Zemstvo to abandon mild speeches and to speak firmly is “overestimating ideology”? Do they imagine the workers can “gather strength” for the struggle against the autocracy if they know nothing about the attitude of the autocracy towards the Zemstvo *as well?* All this too remains unknown. One thing alone is clear and that is that the authors of the letter have a very vague idea of what the political tasks of Social-Democracy are. This is revealed still more clearly by their remark: “Such, too, is *Iskra* ’s attitude towards the student movement” (i.e., it also “obscures the class antagonisms”). Instead of calling on the workers to declare by means of public demonstrations that the real breeding-place of unbridled violence, disorder, and outrage is not the university youth but the Russian Government (*Iskra* , No. 2 [81]) we

ought probably to have inserted arguments in the spirit of *Rabochaya Mysl* ! Such ideas were expressed by Social-Democrats in the autumn of 1901, after the events of February and March, on the eve of a fresh upsurge of the student movement, which reveals that even in this sphere the "spontaneous" protest against the autocracy is *outstripping* the conscious Social-Democratic leadership of the movement. The spontaneous striving of the workers to defend the students who are being assaulted by the police and the Cossacks surpasses the conscious activity of the Social-Democratic organization!

"And yet in other articles," continue the authors of the letter, " *Iskra* sharply condemns all compromise and defends, for instance, the intolerant conduct of the Guesdists." We would advise those who are wont so conceitedly and frivolously to declare that the present disagreements among the Social-Democrats are unessential and do not justify a split, to ponder these words. Is it possible for people to work together in the same organization, when some among them contend that we have done extremely little to explain the hostility of the autocracy to the various classes and to inform the workers of the opposition displayed by the various social strata to the autocracy, while others among them see in this clarification a "compromise" — evidently a compromise with the theory of "economic struggle against the employers and the government"?

We urged the necessity of carrying the class struggle into the rural districts in connection with the fortieth anniversary of the emancipation of the peasantry (issue No. 3 [82] and spoke of the irreconcilability of the local government bodies and the autocracy in relation to Witte's secret Memorandum (No. 4). In connection with the new law we attacked the feudal landlords and the government which serves them (No. 8 [83]) and we welcomed the illegal Zemstvo congress. We urged the Zemstvo to pass over from abject petitions (No. 8 [84]) to struggle. We encouraged the students, who had begun to understand the need for the political struggle, and to undertake this struggle (No. 3), while, at the same time, we lashed out at the "outrageous incomprehension" revealed by the adherents of the "purely student" movement, who called upon the students to abstain from participating in the street demonstrations (No. 3, in connection with the

manifesto issued by the Executive Committee of the Moscow students on February 25). We exposed the "senseless dreams" and the "lying hypocrisy" of the cunning liberals of *Rossiya* [85] (No. 5), while pointing to the violent fury with which the government-gaoler persecuted "peaceful writers, aged professors, scientists, and well-known liberal Zemstvo members" (No. 5, "Police Raid on Literature"). We exposed the real significance of the programme of "state protection for the welfare of the workers" and welcomed the "valuable admission" that "it is better, by granting reforms from above, to forestall the demand for such reforms from below than to wait for those demands to be put forward" (No. 6 [86]). We encouraged the protesting statisticians (No. 7) and censured the strike-breaking statisticians (No. 9). He who sees in these tactics an obscuring of the class-consciousness of the proletariat and *a compromise with liberalism* reveals his utter failure to understand the true significance of the programme of the *Credo* and *carries out that programme de facto* , however much he may repudiate it. For by *such an approach* he drags Social-Democracy towards the "economic struggle against the employers and the government" and *yields to liberalism* , abandons the task of actively intervening in every "liberal" issue and of determining *his own* , Social-Democratic, attitude towards this question.

F. Once More "Slanderers", Once More "Mystifiers"

These polite expressions, as the reader will recall, belong to *Rabocheye Dyelo* , which in this way answers our charge that it "is indirectly preparing the ground for converting the working-class movement into an instrument of bourgeois democracy". In its simplicity of heart *Rabocheye Dyelo* decided that this accusation was nothing more than a polemical sally: these malicious doctrinaires are bent on saying all sorts of unpleasant things about us, and, what can be more unpleasant than being an instrument of bourgeois democracy? And so they print in bold type a "refutation": "Nothing but downright slander", "mystification", "mummery" (*Two Conferences* , pp. 30, 31, 33). Like Jove, *Rabocheye Dyelo* (although bearing little resemblance to that deity) is wrathful because it is wrong, and proves by its hasty abuse that it is incapable of understanding its opponents'

mode of reasoning. And yet, with only a little reflection it would have understood why *any* subservience to the spontaneity of the mass movement and *any* degrading of Social-Democratic politics to the level of trade-unionist politics mean preparing the ground for converting the working-class movement into an instrument of bourgeois democracy. The spontaneous working-class movement is by itself able to create (and inevitably does create) only trade-unionism, and working-class trade-unionist politics is precisely working-class bourgeois politics. The fact that the working class participates in the political struggle, and even in the political revolution, does not in itself make its politics Social-Democratic politics. Will *Rabocheye Dyelo* make bold to deny this? Will it, at long last, publicly, plainly, and without equivocation explain how it understands the urgent questions of international and of Russian Social-Democracy? Hardly. It will never do anything of the kind, because it holds fast to the trick, which might be described as the "not here" method — "It's not me, it's not my horse, I'm not the driver. We are not Economists; *Rabochaya Mysl* does not stand for Economism; there is no Economism at all in Russia." This is a remarkably adroit and "political" trick, which suffers from the slight defect, however, that the publications practicing it are usually nicknamed, "At your service, sir".

Rabocheye Dyelo imagines that bourgeois democracy in Russia is, in general, merely a "phantom" (*Two Conferences* , p. 32). [87] Happy people! Ostrich-like, they bury their heads in the sand and imagine that everything around has disappeared. Liberal publicists who month after month proclaim to the world their triumph over the collapse and even the disappearance of Marxism; liberal newspapers (*S. Peterburgskiye Vedomosti* , [88] *Russkiye Vedomosti* , and many others) which encourage the liberals who bring to the workers the Brentano [89] conception of the class struggle and the trade-unionist conception of politics; the galaxy of critics of Marxism, whose real tendencies were so very well disclosed by the *Credo* and whose literary products alone circulate in Russia without let or hindrance; the revival of revolutionary *non* -Social-Democratic tendencies, particularly after the February and March events — all these, apparently, are just phantoms! All these have nothing at all to do with bourgeois democracy!

Rabocheye Dyelo and the authors of the Economist letter published in *Iskra*, No. 12, should "ponder over the reason why the events of the spring brought about such a revival of revolutionary non-Social-Democratic tendencies instead of increasing the authority and the prestige of Social-Democracy".

The reason lies in the fact that we failed to cope with our tasks. The masses of the workers proved to be more active than we. We lacked adequately trained revolutionary leaders and organizers possessed of a thorough knowledge of the mood prevailing among all the opposition strata and able to head the movement, to turn a spontaneous demonstration into a political one, broaden its political character, etc. Under such circumstances, our backwardness will inevitably be utilized by the more mobile and more energetic non-Social-Democratic revolutionaries, and the workers, however energetically and self-sacrificing they may fight the police and the troops, however revolutionary their actions may be, will prove to be merely a force supporting those revolutionaries, the rearguard of bourgeois democracy, and not the Social-Democratic vanguard. Let us take, for example, the German Social-Democrats, whose weak aspects alone our Economists desire to emulate. Why is there *not a single* political event in Germany that does not add to the authority and prestige of Social-Democracy? Because Social-Democracy is always found to be in advance of all others in furnishing the most revolutionary appraisal of every given event and in championing every protest against tyranny. It does not lull itself with arguments that the economic struggle brings the workers to realize that they have no political rights and that the concrete conditions unavoidably impel the working-class movement on to the path of revolution. It intervenes in every sphere and in every question of social and political life; in the matter of Wilhelm's refusal to endorse a bourgeois progressist as city mayor (our Economists have not yet managed to educate. the Germans to the understanding that such an act is, in fact, a compromise with liberalism!); in the matter of the law against "obscene" publications and pictures; in the matter of governmental influence on the election of professors, etc., etc. Everywhere the Social-Democrats are found in the forefront, rousing political discontent among all classes, rousing the sluggards, stimulating the laggards, and providing a wealth of material for the development of the political consciousness and

the political activity of the proletariat. As a result, even the avowed enemies of socialism are filled with respect for this advanced political fighter, and not infrequently an important document from bourgeois, and even from bureaucratic and Court circles, makes its way by some miraculous means into the editorial office of *Vorwarts.*

This, then, is the resolution of the seeming "contradiction" that surpasses *Rabocheye Dyelo* 's powers of understanding to such an extent that it can only throw up its hands and cry, "Mummery!" Indeed, just think of it: We, *Rabocheye Dyelo* , regard the *mass* working-class movement as the *corner-stone* (and say so in bold type!); we warn all and sundry against belittling the significance of the element of spontaneity; we desire to lend the economic struggle itself — *itself* — a political character; we desire to maintain close and organic contact with the proletarian struggle. And yet we are told that we are preparing the ground for the conversion of the working-class movement into an instrument of bourgeois democracy! And who are they that presume to say this? People who "compromise" with liberalism by intervening in every "liberal" issue (what a gross misunderstanding of "organic contact with the proletarian struggle"!), by devoting so much attention to the students and even (oh horror!) to the Zemstvos! People who in general wish to devote a greater percentage (compared with the Economists) of their efforts to activity among non-proletarian classes of the population! What is this but "mummery"?

Poor *Rabocheye Dyelo!* Will it ever find the solution to this perplexing puzzle?

Chapter 4: The Primitiveness of the Economists and the Organization of the Revolutionaries

Rabocheye Dyelo's assertions, which we have analyzed, that the economic struggle is the most widely applicable means of political agitation and that our task now is to lend the economic struggle itself a political character, etc., express a narrow view, not only of our political, but also of our organizational tasks. The "economic struggle against the employers and the government" does not at all require an all-Russia centralized organization, and hence this struggle can never give rise to such an organization as will combine, in one general assault, all the manifestations of political opposition, protest, and indignation, an organization that will consist of professional revolutionaries and be led by the real political leaders of the entire people. This stands to reason. The character of any organization is naturally and inevitably determined by the content of its activity. Consequently, *Rabocheye Dyelo* , by the assertions analyzed above, sanctifies and legitimizes not only narrowness of political activity, but also of organizational work. In this case, *Rabocheye Dyelo* , as always, proves itself an organ whose consciousness yields to spontaneity. Yet subservience to spontaneously developing forms of organization, failure to realize the narrowness and primitiveness of our organizational work, of our "handicraft" methods in this most important sphere, failure to realize this, I say, is a veritable ailment from which our movement suffers. It is not an ailment that comes with decline, but one, of course, that comes with growth. It is however at the present time, when the wave of spontaneous indignation, as it were, is sweeping over us, leaders and organizers of the movement, that an irreconcilable struggle must be waged against all defense of backwardness, against any legitimation of narrowness in this matter. It is particularly necessary to arouse in all who participate in practical work, or are preparing to take up that work, discontent with the *amateurism* prevailing among us and an unshakable determination to rid ourselves of it.

A. What is Primitiveness?

We shall try to answer this question by giving a brief description of the activity of a typical Social-Democratic study circle of the period 1894-1901. We have noted that the entire student youth of the period was absorbed in Marxism. Of course, these students were not only, or even not so much, interested in Marxism as a theory; they were interested in it as an answer to the question, "What is to be done?", as a call to take the field against the enemy. These new warriors marched to battle with astonishingly primitive equipment and training. In a vast number of cases they had almost no equipment and absolutely no training. They marched to war like peasants from the plow, armed only with clubs. A students' circle establishes contacts with workers and sets to work, without any connection with the old members of the movement, without any connection with study circles in other districts, or even in other parts of the same city (or in other educational institutions), without any organization of the various divisions of revolutionary work, without any systematic plan of activity covering any length of time. The circle gradually expands its propaganda and agitation; by its activities it wins the sympathies of fairly large sections of workers and of a certain section of the educated strata, which provide it with money and from among whom the "committee" recruits new groups of young people. The attractive power of the committee (or League of Struggle) grows, its sphere of activity becomes wider, and the committee expands this activity quite spontaneously; the very people who a year or a few months previously spoke at the students' circle gatherings and discussed the question, "Whither?", who established and maintained contacts with the workers and wrote and published leaflets, now, establish contacts with other groups of revolutionaries, procure literature, set to work to publish a local newspaper, begin to talk of organizing a demonstration, and finally turn to open warfare (which may, according to circumstances, take the form of issuing the first agitational leaflet or the first issue of a newspaper, or of organizing the first demonstration). Usually the initiation of such actions ends in an immediate and complete fiasco. Immediate and complete, because this open warfare was not the result of a systematic and carefully thought-out and gradually prepared plan for a prolonged and stubborn struggle, but simply the result of the spontaneous growth of traditional

study circle work; because, naturally, the police, in almost every case, knew the principal leaders of the local movement, since they had already "gained a reputation" for themselves in their student days, and the police waited only for the right moment to make their raid. They deliberately allowed the study circle sufficient time to develop its work so that they might, obtain a palpable *corpus delicti* , and they always permitted several of the persons known to them to remain at liberty "for breeding" (which, as far as I know, is the technical term used both by our people and by the gendarmes). One cannot help comparing this kind of warfare with that conducted by a mass of peasants, armed with clubs, against modern troops. And one can only wonder at the vitality of the movement which expanded, grew, and scored victories despite the total lack of training on the part of the fighters. True, from the historical point of view, the primitiveness of equipment was not only inevitable at first, but *even legitimate* as one of the conditions for the wide recruiting of fighters, but as soon as serious war operations began (and they began in fact with the strikes in the summer of 1896), the defects in our fighting organizations made themselves felt to an ever-increasing degree. The government, at first thrown into confusion and committing a number of blunders (e.g., its appeal to the public describing the misdeeds of the socialists, or the banishment of workers from the capitals to provincial industrial centers), very soon adapted itself to the new conditions of the struggle and managed to deploy well its perfectly equipped detachments of *agents provocateurs* , spies, and gendarmes. Raids became so frequent, affected such a vast number of people, and cleared out the local study circles so thoroughly that the masses of the workers lost literally all their leaders, the movement assumed an amazingly sporadic character, and it became utterly impossible to establish continuity and coherence in the work. The terrible dispersion of the local leaders; the fortuitous character of the study circle memberships; the lack of training in, and the narrow outlook on, theoretical, political, and organizational questions were all the inevitable result of the conditions described above. Things have reached such a pass that in several places the workers, because of our lack of self-restraint and the inability to maintain secrecy, begin to lose faith in the intellectuals and to avoid them; the intellectuals, they say, are much too careless and cause police raids!

Anyone who has the slightest knowledge of the movement is aware that all thinking Social-Democrats have at last begun to regard these amateurish methods as a disease. In order that the reader who is not acquainted with the movement may have no grounds for thinking that we are "inventing" a special stage or special disease of the movement, we shall refer once again to the witness we have quoted. We trust we shall be forgiven for the length of the passage:

"While the gradual transition to more extensive practical activity," writes B-v in *Rabocheye Dyelo* , No. 6, "a transition that is directly dependent on the general transitional period through which the Russian working-class movement is now passing, is a characteristic feature, . . . there is, however, another, no less interesting feature in the general mechanism of the Russian workers' revolution. *We refer to the general lack of revolutionary forces fit for action* , [all italics ours — Lenin] which is felt not only in St. Petersburg, but throughout Russia. With the general revival of the working-class movement, with the general development of the working masses, with the growing frequency of strikes, with the increasingly open mass struggle of the workers, and with the intensified government persecution, arrests, deportation, and exile, this *lack of highly skilled revolutionary forces is becoming more and more marked* and, without a doubt, *cannot but affect the depth and the general character of the movement.* Many strikes take place without any strong and direct influence upon them by the revolutionary organizations.... A shortage of agitational leaflets and illegal literature Is felt.... The workers' study circles are left without agitators.... In addition, there is a constant dearth of funds. In a word, *the growth of the working class movement is outstripping the growth and development of the revolutionary organizations.* The numerical strength of the active revolutionaries is too small to enable them to concentrate in their own hands the influence exercised upon the whole mass of discontented workers, or to give this discontent even a shadow of coherence and organization.... The separate study circles, the separate revolutionaries, scattered, uncombined, do not represent a single, strong, and disciplined organization with proportionately developed parts. . . ." Admitting that the immediate organization of fresh study circles to replace those that have been broken up merely proves the vitality of the movement ... but does not prove the

existence of an adequate number of adequately prepared revolutionary workers, the author concludes: “The lack of practical training among the St. Petersburg revolutionaries is seen in the results of their work. The recent trials, especially that of the Self-Emancipation Group and the Labor-against-Capital group, [90] clearly showed that the young agitator, lacking a detailed knowledge of working class conditions and, consequently, of the conditions under which agitation can be carried on in a given factory, ignorant of the principles of secrecy, and understanding only the general principles of Social-Democracy [if he does], is able to carry on his work for perhaps four, five, or six months. Then come arrests, which frequently lead to the break-up of the entire organization, or at all events, of part of it. The question arises, therefore, can the group conduct successful activity if its existence is measured by months?... Obviously, the defects of the existing organizations cannot be wholly ascribed to the transitional period.... Obviously, the numerical, and above all the qualitative, make-up of the functioning organizations is no small factor, and the first task our Social-Democrats must undertake ... is that of *effectively combining the organizations and making a strict selection of their membership.”*

B. Primitiveness and Economism

We must now deal with a question that has undoubtedly come to the mind of every reader. Can a connection be established between primitiveness as growing pains that affect the *whole* movement, and Economism, which is *one* of the currents in Russian Social-Democracy? We think that it can. Lack of practical training, of ability to carry on organizational work is certainly common *to us all* , including those who have from the very outset unswervingly stood for revolutionary Marxism. Of course, were it only lack of practical training, no one could blame the practical workers. But the term “primitiveness” embraces something more than lack of training; it denotes a narrow scope of revolutionary work generally, failure to understand that a good organization of revolutionaries cannot be built on the basis of such narrow activity, and lastly — and this is the main thing — attempts to justify this narrowness and to elevate it to a special “theory”, i.e., subservience to spontaneity on this question too. Once such attempts

were revealed, it became clear that primitiveness is connected with Economism and that we shall never rid ourselves of this narrowness of our organizational activity until we rid ourselves of Economism generally (i.e., the narrow conception of Marxist theory, as well as of the role of Social-Democracy and of its political tasks). These attempts manifested themselves in a twofold direction. Some began to say that the working masses themselves have not yet advanced the broad and militant political tasks which the revolutionaries are attempting to "impose" on them; that they must continue to struggle for *immediate* political demands, to conduct "the economic struggle against the employers and the government" [91] (and, naturally, corresponding to this struggle which is "accessible" to the mass movement there must be an organization that will be "accessible" to the most untrained youth). Others, far removed from any theory of "gradualness", said that it is possible and necessary to "bring about a political revolution", but that this does not require building a strong organization of revolutionaries to train the proletariat in steadfast and stubborn struggle. All we need to do is to snatch up our old friend, the "accessible" cudgel. To drop metaphor, it means that we must organize a general strike, [92] or that we must stimulate the "spiritless" progress of the working-class movement by means of "excitative terror". [93] Both these trends, the opportunists and the "revolutionists", bow to the prevailing amateurism; neither believes that it can be eliminated, neither understands our primary and imperative practical task to establish *an organization of revolutionaries* capable of lending energy, stability, and continuity to the political struggle.

We have quoted the words of B-v: "The growth of the working-class movement is outstripping the growth and development of the revolutionary organizations." This "valuable remark of a close observer" (*Rabocheye Dyelo* 's comment on B-v's article) has a twofold value for us. It shows that we were right in our opinion that the principal cause of the present crisis in Russian Social-Democracy is the *lag of the leaders* ("ideologists", revolutionaries, Social-Democrats) behind *the spontaneous upsurge of the masses* . It shows that all the arguments advanced by the authors of the Economist letter (in *Iskra* , No. 12), by Krichevsky and by Martynov, as to the danger of belittling the significance of the spontaneous element, of the

drab everyday struggle, as to tactics-as-process, etc., are nothing more than a glorification and a defense of primitiveness. These people who cannot pronounce the word "theoretician" without a sneer, who describe their genuflections to common lack of training and backwardness as a "sense for the realities of life", reveal in practice a failure to understand our most imperative *practical* tasks. To laggards they shout: Keep in step! Don't run ahead! To people suffering from a lack of energy and initiative in organizational work, from a lack of "plans" for wide and bold activity, they prate about "tactics-as-process"! The worst sin we commit is that we *degrade* our political *and organizational* tasks to the level of the immediate, "palpable", "concrete" interests of the everyday economic struggle; yet they keep singing to us the same refrain: Lend the economic struggle itself a political character! We repeat: this kind of thing displays as much "sense for the realities of life" as was displayed by the hero in the popular fable who cried out to a passing funeral procession, "Many happy returns of the day!"

Recall the matchless, truly "Narcissus-like" superciliousness with which these wiseacres lectured Plekhanov on the "workers' *circles* generally" (sic!) being "unable to cope with political tasks in the real and *practical* sense of the word, i.e., in the sense of the expedient and successful *practical* struggle for political demands" (*Rabocheye Dyelo's Reply,* p. 24). There are circles and circles, gentlemen! Circles of "amateurs" are not, of course, capable of coping with political tasks so long as they have not become aware of their amateurism and do not abandon it. If, besides this, these amateurs are enamored of their primitive methods, and insist on writing the word "practical" in italics, and imagine that being practical demands that one's tasks be reduced to the level of understanding of the most backward strata of the masses, then they are hopeless amateurs and, of course, certainly cannot *in general cope with any political tasks* . But a circle of leaders, of the type of Alexeyev and Myshkin, of Khalturin and Zhelyabov, is capable of coping with political tasks in the genuine and most practical sense of the term, for the reason and to the extent that their impassioned propaganda meets with response among the spontaneously awakening masses, and their sparkling energy is answered and supported by the energy of the revolutionary class. Plekhanov was profoundly right, not only in pointing to this revolutionary class and proving that its spontaneous

awakening was inevitable, but in setting even the "workers' circles" a great and lofty political task. But you refer to the mass movement that has sprung up since that time in order to *degrade* this task, to *curtail* the energy and scope of activity of the "workers' circles". If you are not amateurs enamored of your primitive methods, what are you then? You boast that you are practical, but you fail to see what every Russian practical worker knows, namely, the miracles that the energy, not only of a circle, but even of an individual person is able to perform in the revolutionary cause. Or do you think that our movement cannot produce leaders like those of the seventies? If so, why do you think so? Because we lack training? But we are training ourselves, we will go on training ourselves, and we will be trained! Unfortunately it is true that the surface of the stagnant waters of the "economic struggle against the employers and the government" is overgrown with fungus; people have appeared among us who kneel in prayer to spontaneity, gazing with awe (to take an expression from Plekhanov) upon the "posterior" of the Russian proletariat. But we will get rid of this fungus. The time has come when Russian revolutionaries, guided by a genuinely revolutionary theory, relying upon the genuinely revolutionary and spontaneously awakening class, can at last — at long last! — rise to full stature in all their giant strength. All that is required is for the masses of our practical workers, and the still larger masses of those who dreamed of practical work when they were still at school, to pour scorn and ridicule upon any suggestion that may be made to degrade our political tasks and to restrict the scope of our organizational work. And we will achieve that, rest assured, gentlemen!

In the article "Where To Begin", I wrote in opposition to *Rabocheye Dyelo* : "The tactics of agitation in relation to some special question, or the tactics with regard to some detail of party organization may be changed in twenty-four hours; but only people devoid of all principle are capable of changing, in twenty-four hours, or, for that matter, in twenty-four months, their view on the necessity — in general, constantly, and absolutely — of an organization of struggle and of political agitation among the masses." [94] To this *Rabocheye Dyelo* replied: "This, the only one of *Iskra* 's charges that makes a pretense of being based on facts, is totally without foundation. Readers of *Rabocheye Dyelo* know very well that from the outset we not only called for political agitation, without waiting for the appearance of

Iskra ... [saying at the same time that not only the workers' study circles, "but also the mass working-class movement could not regard as its first political task the overthrow of absolutism", but only the struggle for immediate political demands, and that "the masses begin to understand immediate political demands after one, or at all events, after several strikes"], . . . but that with our publications which we furnished from abroad for the comrades working in Russia, we provided the *only* Social-Democratic political and agitational material ... [and in this sole material you not only based the widest political agitation exclusively on the economic struggle, but you even went to the extent of claiming that this restricted agitation was the "most widely applicable". And do you not observe, gentlemen, that your own argument — that this was the *only* material provided — proves the necessity for *Iskra* 's appearance, and its struggle against *Rabocheye Dyelo* ?].... On the other hand, our publishing activity actually prepared the ground for the tactical unity of the Party... [unity in the conviction that tactics is a process of growth of Party tasks that grow together with the Party? A precious unity indeed!]... and by that rendered possible the creation of a 'militant organization' for which the Union Abroad did all that an organization abroad could do" (*Rabocheye Dyelo* , No. 10, p. 15). A vain attempt at evasion! I would never dream of denying that you did all you possibly could. I have asserted and assert now that the *limits* of what is "possible" for you to do are restricted by the narrowness of your outlook. It is ridiculous to talk of a "militant organization" to fight for "immediate political demands", or to conduct the economic struggle against the employers and the government".

But if the reader wishes to see the pearls of "Economist" infatuation with amateurism, he must, of course, turn from the eclectic and vacillating *Rabocheye Dyelo* to the consistent and determined *Rabochaya Mysl* . In its *Separate Supplement* , p. 13, R. M. wrote: "Now two words about the so-called revolutionary intelligentsia proper. True, on more than one occasion it has proved itself prepared 'to enter into determined battle with tsarism'. The unfortunate thing, however, is that our revolutionary intelligentsia, ruthlessly persecuted by the political police, imagined the struggle against the political police to be the political struggle against the autocracy. That is why, to this day, it cannot understand 'where the forces for the struggle against the autocracy are to be obtained'."

Truly matchless is the lofty contempt for the struggle against the police displayed by this worshiper (in the worst sense of the word) of the *spontaneous* movement! He is prepared *to justify* our inability to organize secret activity by the argument that with the spontaneous mass movement it is not at all important for us to struggle against the political police! Very few people indeed would subscribe to this appalling conclusion; to such an extent have our deficiencies in revolutionary organizations become a matter of acute importance. But if Martynov, for example, refuses to subscribe to this, it will only be because he is unable, or lacks the courage, to think out his ideas to their logical conclusion. Indeed, does the "task" of advancing concrete demands by the masses, demands that promise palpable results, call for special efforts to create a stable, centralized, militant organization of revolutionaries? Cannot such a "task" be carried out even by masses that do not "struggle against the political police" at all? Could this task, moreover, be fulfilled if, in addition to the few leaders, it were not undertaken by such workers (the overwhelming majority) as are quite *incapable* of "struggling against the political police"? Such workers, average people of the masses, are capable of displaying enormous energy and self sacrifice in strikes and in street, battles with the police and the troops, and are capable (in fact, are alone capable) of *determining* the outcome of our entire movement — but the struggle against the *political* police requires special qualities; it requires *professional* revolutionaries. And we must see to it, not only that the masses "advance" concrete demands, but that the masses of the workers "advance" an increasing number of such professional revolutionaries. Thus, we have reached the question of the relation between an organization of professional revolutionaries and the labor movement pure and simple. Although this question has found little reflection in literature, it has greatly engaged us "politicians" in conversations and polemics with comrades who gravitate more or less towards Economism. It is a question meriting special treatment. But before taking it up, let us offer one further quotation by way of illustrating our thesis on the connection between primitiveness and Economism.

In his *Reply* , Mr. N. N. [95] wrote: "The Emancipation of Labour group demands direct struggle against the government without first considering

where the material forces for this struggle are to be obtained, and without indicating the *path of the struggle* .” Emphasizing the last words, the author adds the following footnote to the word “Path”: “This cannot be explained by purposes of secrecy, because the programme does not refer to a plot but to *a mass movement.* And the masses cannot proceed by secret paths. Can we conceive of a secret strike? Can we conceive of secret demonstrations and petitions?” (*Vademecum* , p. 59.) Thus, the author comes quite close to the question of the “material forces” (organizers of strikes and demonstrations) and to the “paths” of the struggle, but, nevertheless, is still in a state of consternation, because he “worships” the mass movement, i.e., he regards it as something that *relieves* us of the necessity of conducting revolutionary activity and not as something that should encourage us and *stimulate* our revolutionary activity. It is impossible for a strike to remain a secret to those participating in it and to those immediately associated with it, but it may (and in the majority of cases does) remain a “secret” to the masses of the Russian workers, because the government takes care to cut all communication with the strikers, to prevent all news of strikes from spreading. Here indeed is where a special “struggle against the political police” is required, a struggle that can never be conducted actively by such large masses as taking part in strikes. This struggle must be organized, according to “all the rules of the art”, by people who are professionally engaged in revolutionary activity. The fact that the masses are spontaneously being drawn into the movement does not make the organization of this struggle *less necessary* . On the contrary, it makes it *more necessary;* for we socialists would be failing in our direct duty to the masses if we did not prevent the police from making a secret of every strike and every demonstration (and if we did not ourselves from time to time secretly prepare strikes and demonstrations). And we *will succeed in doing this* , because the spontaneously awakening masses will *also produce* increasing numbers of “professional revolutionaries” *from their own ranks* (that is, if we do not take it into our heads to advise the workers to keep on marking time).

C. Organization of Workers and Organization of Revolutionaries

It is only natural to expect that for a Social-Democrat whose conception of the political struggle coincides with the conception of the "economic struggle against the employers and the government", the "organization of revolutionaries" will more or less coincide with the "organization of workers". This, in fact, is what actually happens; so that when we speak of organization, we literally speak in different tongues. I vividly recall, for example, a conversation I once had with a fairly consistent Economist, with whom I had not been previously acquainted. We were discussing the pamphlet, *Who Will Bring About the Political Revolution?* and were soon of a mind that its principal defect was its ignoring of the question of organization. We had begun to assume full agreement between us; but, as the conversation proceeded, it became evident that we were talking of different things. My interlocutor accused the author of ignoring strike funds, mutual benefit societies, etc., whereas I had in mind an organization of revolutionaries as an essential factor in "bringing about" the political revolution. As soon as the disagreement became clear, there was hardly, as I remember, a single question of principle upon which I was in agreement with the Economist!

What was the source of our disagreement? It was the fact that on questions both of organization and of politics the Economists are forever lapsing from Social-Democracy into trade-unionism. The political struggle of Social-Democracy is far more extensive and complex than the economic struggle of the workers against the employers and the government. Similarly (indeed for that reason), the organization of the revolutionary Social-Democratic Party must inevitably be of *a kind different* from the organization of the workers designed for this struggle. The workers' organization must in the first place be a trade union organization; secondly, it must be as broad as possible; and thirdly, it must be as public as conditions will allow (here, and further on, of course, I refer only to absolutist Russia). On the other hand, the organization of the revolutionaries must consist first and foremost of people who make revolutionary activity their profession (for which reason I speak of the organization of *revolutionaries* , meaning revolutionary Social-Democrats). In view of this common characteristic of the members of such an organization, *all distinctions as between workers and intellectuals* , not to speak of distinctions of trade and profession, in both categories, *must be*

effaced . Such an organization must not be very extensive and must be as secret as possible. Let us examine this threefold distinction.

In countries where political liberty exists the distinction between a trade union and a political organization is clear enough, as is the distinction between trade unions and Social-Democracy. The relations between the latter and the former will naturally vary in each country according to historical, legal, and other conditions; they may be more or less close, complex, etc. (in our opinion they should be as close and as little complicated as possible); but there can be no question in free countries of the organization of trade unions coinciding with the organization of the Social-Democratic Party. In Russia, however, the yoke of the autocracy appears at first glance to obliterate all distinctions between the Social-Democratic organization and the workers' associations, since *all* workers' associations and *all* study circles are prohibited, and since the principal manifestation and weapon of the workers' economic struggle — the strike — is regarded as a criminal (and sometimes even as a political!) offense. Conditions in our country, therefore, on the one hand, strongly "impel" the workers engaged in economic struggle to concern themselves with political questions, and, on the other, they "impel" Social-Democrats to confound trade-unionism with Social-Democracy (and our Krichevskys, Martynoys, and Co., while diligently discussing the first kind of "impulsion", fail to notice the second). Indeed, picture people who are immersed ninety-nine percent in "the economic struggle against the employers and the government". Some of them will never, during the *entire* course of their activity (from four to six months), be impelled to think of the need for a more complex organization of revolutionaries. Others, perhaps, will come across the fairly widely distributed Bernsteinian literature, from which they will become convinced of the profound importance of the forward movement of "the drab everyday struggle". Still others will be carried away, perhaps, by the seductive idea of showing the world a new example of "close and organic contact with the proletarian struggle" — contact between the trade union and the Social Democratic movements. Such people may argue that the later a country enters the arena of capitalism and, consequently, of the working-class movement, the more the socialists in that country may take part in, and support, the trade union movement, and the less the reason for the existence of non-Social-Democratic trade unions. So

far the argument is fully correct; unfortunately, however, some go beyond that and dream of a complete fusion of Social-Democracy with trade-unionism. We shall soon see, from the example of the Rules of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle, what a harmful effect such dreams have upon our plans of organization.

The workers' organizations for the economic struggle should be trade union organizations. Every Social-Democratic worker should as far as possible assist and actively work in these organizations. But, while this is true, it is certainly not in our interest to demand that only Social-Democrats should be eligible for membership in the "trade" unions, since that would only narrow the scope of our influence upon the masses. Let every worker who understands the need to unite for the struggle against the employers and the government join the trade unions. The very aim of the trade unions would be impossible to achieve, if they did not unite all who have attained at least this elementary degree of understanding, if they were not very *broad* organizations. The broader these organizations, the broader will be our influence over them — an influence due, not only to the "spontaneous" development of the economic struggle, but to the direct and conscious effort of the socialist trade union members to influence their comrades. But a broad organization cannot apply methods of strict secrecy (since this demands far greater training than is required for the economic struggle). How is the contradiction between the need for a large membership and the need for strictly secret methods to be reconciled? How are we to make the trade unions as public as possible? Generally speaking, there can be only two ways to this end: either the trade unions become legalized (in some countries this preceded the legalization of the socialist and political unions), or the organization is kept secret, but so "free" and amorphous, *lose* [96] as the Germans say, that the need for secret methods becomes almost negligible as far as the bulk of the members is concerned.

The legalization of non-socialist and non-political labor unions in Russia has begun, and there is no doubt that every advance made by our rapidly growing Social-Democratic working-class movement will multiply and encourage attempts at legalization — attempts proceeding for the most part from supporters of the existing order, but partly also from the workers

themselves and from liberal intellectuals. The banner of legality has already been hoisted by the Vasilyevs and the Zubatovs. Support has been promised and rendered by the Ozerovs and the Wormses , [97] and followers of the new tendency are now to be found among the workers. Henceforth, we cannot but reckon with this tendency. How we are to reckon with it, there can be no two opinions among Social-Democrats. We must steadfastly expose any part played in this movement by the Zubatovs and the Vasilyeys, the gendarmes and the priests, and explain their real intentions to the workers. We must also expose all the conciliatory, "harmonious" notes that will be heard in the speeches of liberal politicians at legal meetings of the workers, irrespective of whether the speeches are motivated by an earnest conviction of the desirability of peaceful class collaboration, by a desire to curry favor with the powers that be, or whether they are simply the result of clumsiness. Lastly, we must warn the workers against the traps often set by the police, who at such open meetings and permitted societies spy out the "fiery ones" and try to make use of legal organizations to plant their *agents provocateurs* in the illegal organizations.

Doing all this does not at all mean forgetting that *in the long* run the legalization of the working-class movement will be to our advantage, and not to that of the Zubatovs. On the contrary, it is precisely our campaign of exposure that will help us to separate the tares from the wheat. What the tares are, we have already indicated. By the wheat we mean attracting the attention of ever larger numbers, including the most backward sections, of the workers to social and political questions, and freeing ourselves, the revolutionaries, from functions that are essentially legal (the distribution of legal books, mutual aid, etc.), the development of which will inevitably provide us with an increasing quantity of material for agitation. In this sense, we may, and should, say to the Zubatovs and the Ozerovs : Keep at it, gentlemen, do your best! Whenever you place a trap in the path of the workers (either by way of direct provocation, or by the "honest" demoralization of the workers with the aid of " Struvism") we will see to it that you are exposed. But whenever you take a real step forward, though it be the most "timid zigzag", we will say: Please continue! And the only step that can be a real step forward is a real, if small, extension of the workers' field of action. Every such extension will be to our advantage and will help to hasten the advent of legal societies of the kind in which it will not be

agents provocateurs who are detecting socialists, but socialists who are gaining adherents. in a word, our task is to fight the tares. It is not our business to grow wheat in flower-pots. By pulling up the tares, we clear the soil for the wheat. And while the Afanasy Ivanoviches and Pulkheria Ivanovnas [98] are tending their flower-pot crops, we must prepare the reapers, not only to cut down the tares of today, but to reap the wheat of tomorrow. [99]

Thus, we cannot by means of legalization *solve* the problem of creating a trade union organization that will be as little secret and as extensive as possible (but we should be extremely glad if the Zubatovs and the Ozerovs disclosed to us even a partial opportunity for such a solution — to this end, however, *we must* strenuously combat them). There remain secret trade union organizations, and we must give all possible assistance to the workers who (as we definitely know) are adopting this course. Trade union organizations, not only can be of tremendous value in developing and consolidating the economic struggle, but can also become a very important auxiliary to political agitation and revolutionary organization. In order to achieve this purpose, and in order to guide the nascent trade union movement in the channels desired by Social-Democracy, we must first understand clearly the absurdity of the plan of organization the St. Petersburg Economists have been nursing for nearly five years. That plan is set forth in the "Rules for a Workers' Mutual Benefit Fund" of July 1897 (" *Listok* " *Rabotnika* , No. 9-10, p. 46, taken from *Rabochaya Mysl* , No. 1), as well as in the "Rules for a Trade Union Workers' Organisation" of October 1900 (special leaflet printed in St. Petersburg and referred to in *Iskra* , No. 1). Both these sets of rules have one main shortcoming: they set up the broad workers' organization in a rigidly specified structure and confound it with the organization of revolutionaries. Let us take the last-mentioned set of rules, since it is drawn up in greater detail. The body consists of *fifty-two* paragraphs. Twenty-three deal with the structure, the method of functioning, and the competence of the "workers' circles", which are to be organized in every factory ("a maximum of ten persons") and which elect "central (factory) groups". "The central group," says paragraph 2, "observes all that goes on in its factory or workshop and keeps a record of events." "The central group presents to subscribers a monthly financial account" (par. 17), etc. Ten paragraphs are devoted to the "district

organization", and nineteen to the highly complex interconnection between the Committee of the Workers' Organization and the Committee of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle (elected representatives of each district and of the "executive groups" — "groups of propagandists, groups for maintaining contact with the provinces, and with the organization abroad, groups for managing stores; publications, and funds").

Social-Democracy = "executive groups" in relation to the economic struggle of the workers! It would be difficult to show more glaringly how the Economists' ideas deviate from Social-Democracy to trade-unionism, and how alien to them is any idea that a Social-Democrat must concern himself first and foremost with an organization of revolutionaries capable of guiding the *entire* proletarian struggle for emancipation. To talk of "the political emancipation of the working class" and of the struggle against "tsarist despotism", and at the same time to draft rules like these, means to have no idea whatsoever of the real political tasks of Social-Democracy. Not one of the fifty or so paragraphs reveals even a glimmer of understanding that it is necessary to conduct the widest possible political agitation among the masses, an agitation highlighting every aspect of Russian absolutism and the specific features of the various social classes in Russia. Rules like these are of no use even for the achievement of trade union, let alone political aims, since trade unions are organized by *trades* , of which no mention is made.

But most characteristic, perhaps, is the amazing top-heaviness of the whole "system", which attempts to bind each single factory and its "committee" by a permanent string of uniform and ludicrously petty rules and a three-stage system of election. Hemmed in by the narrow outlook of Economism, the mind is lost in details that positively reek of red tape and bureaucracy. In practice, of course, three-fourths of the clauses are never applied; on the other hand, a "secret" organization of this kind, with its central group in each factory, makes it very easy for the gendarmes to carry out raids on a vast scale. The Polish comrades have passed through a similar phase in their movement, with everybody enthusiastic about the extensive organization of workers' benefit funds; but they very quickly abandoned this idea when they saw that such organizations only provided rich harvests for the

gendarmes. If we have in mind broad workers' organizations, and not widespread arrests, if we do not want to provide satisfaction to the gendarmes, we must see to it that these organizations remain without any rigid formal structure. But will they be able to function in that case?

Let us see what the functions are: ". . . To observe all that goes on in the factory and keep a record of events" (par. 2 of the Rules). Do we really require a formally established group for this purpose? Could not the purpose be better served by correspondence conducted in the illegal papers without the setting up of special groups? ". . . To lead the struggles of the workers for the improvement of their workshop conditions" (par. 3). This, too, requires no set organizational form. Any sensible agitator can in the course of ordinary conversation gather what the demands of the workers are and transmit them to a narrow — not a broad — organization of revolutionaries for expression in a leaflet. " ... To organize a fund ... to which subscriptions of two kopeks per ruble [100] should be made" (par. 9) — and then to present to subscribers a monthly financial account (par. 17), to expel members who fail to pay their contributions (par. 10), and so forth. Why, this is a very paradise for the police; for nothing would be easier for them than to penetrate into such a secrecy of a "central factory fund", confiscate the money, and arrest the best people. Would it not be simpler to issue one-kopek or two-kopek coupons bearing the official stamp of a well-known (very narrow and very secret) organization, or to make collections without coupons of any kind and to print reports in a certain agreed code in an illegal paper? The object would thereby be attained, but it would be a hundred times more difficult for the gendarmes to pick up clues.

I could go on analyzing the Rules, but I think that what has been said will suffice. A small, compact core of the most reliable, experienced, and hardened workers, with responsible representatives in the principal districts and connected by all the rules of strict secrecy with the organization of revolutionaries, can, with the widest support of the masses and without any formal organization, perform *all* the functions of a trade union organization, in a manner, moreover, desirable to Social-Democracy. Only in this way can we secure the *consolidation* and development of a *Social-Democratic* trade union movement, despite all the gendarmes.

It may be objected that an organization which is so *loose* that it is not even definitely formed, and which has not even an enrolled and registered membership, cannot be called an organization at all. Perhaps so. Not the name is important. What is important is that this "organization without members " shall do everything that is required, and from the very outset ensure a solid connection between our future trade unions and socialism. Only an incorrigible utopian would have a *broad* organization of workers, with elections, reports, universal suffrage, etc., under the autocracy.

The moral to be drawn from this is simple. If we begin with the solid foundation of a strong organization of revolutionaries, we can ensure the stability of the movement as a whole and carry out the aims both of Social-Democracy and of trade unions proper. If, however, we begin with a broad workers' organization, which is supposedly most "accessible" to the masses (but which is actually most accessible to the gendarmes and makes revolutionaries most accessible to the police), we shall achieve neither the one aim nor the other; we shall not eliminate our rule-of-thumb methods, and, because we remain scattered and our forces are constantly broken up by the police, we shall only make trade unions of the Zubatov and Ozerov type the more accessible to the masses.

What, properly speaking, should be the functions of the organization of revolutionaries? We shall deal with this question in detail. First, however, let us examine a very typical argument advanced by our terrorist, who (sad fate!) in this matter also is a next-door neighbor to the Economist. *Svoboda* , a journal published for workers, contains in its first issue an article entitled "Organization", the author of which tries to defend his friends, the Economist workers of Ivanovo-Voznesensk. He writes:

"It is bad when the masses are mute and unenlightened, when the movement does not come from the rank and file. For instance, the students of a university town leave for their homes during the summer and other holidays, and immediately the workers' movement comes to a standstill. Can a workers' movement which has to be pushed on from outside be a real force? No, indeed.... It has not yet learned to walk, it is still in leading-

strings. So it is in all matters. The students go off, and everything comes to a standstill. The most capable are seized; the cream is skimmed and the milk turns sour. If the ‘committee’ is arrested, everything comes to a standstill until a new one can be formed. And one never knows what sort of committee will be set up next — it may be nothing like the former. The first said one thing, the second may say the very opposite. Continuity between yesterday and tomorrow is broken, the experience of the past does not serve as a guide for the future. And all because no roots have been struck in depth, in the masses; the work is carried on not by a hundred fools, but by a dozen wise men. A dozen wise men can be wiped out at a snap, but when the organization embraces masses, everything proceeds from them, and nobody, however he tries, can wreck the cause” (p. 63).

The facts are described correctly. The picture of our amateurism is well drawn. But the conclusions are worthy of *Rabochaya Mysl* , both as regards their stupidity and their lack of political tact. They represent the height of stupidity, because the author confuses the philosophical and social-historical question of the “depth” of the “roots” of the movement with the technical and organizational question of the best method in combating the gendarmes. They represent the height of political tactlessness, because, instead of appealing from bad leaders to good leaders, the author appeals from the leaders in general to the “masses” . This is as much an attempt to drag us back organizationally as the idea of substituting excitative terrorism for political agitation drags us back politically. Indeed, I am experiencing a veritable *embarras de richesses* , and hardly know where to begin to disentangle the jumble offered up by *Svoboda* . For clarity, let me begin by citing an example. Take the Germans. It will not be denied, I hope, that theirs is a mass organization, that in Germany everything proceeds from the masses, that the working-class movement there has learned to walk. Yet observe how these millions value their “dozen” tried political leaders, how firmly they cling to them. Members of the hostile parties in parliament have often taunted the socialists by exclaiming: “Fine democrats you are indeed! Yours is a working-class movement only in name; in actual fact the same clique of leaders is always in evidence, the same Bebel and the same Liebknecht, year in and year out, and that goes on for decades. Your supposedly elected workers’ deputies are more permanent than the officials appointed by the Emperor!” But the Germans only smile with contempt at

these demagogic attempts to set the "masses" against the "leaders", to arouse bad and ambitious instincts in the former, and to rob the movement of its solidity and stability by undermining the confidence of the masses in their "dozen wise men". Political thinking is sufficiently developed among the Germans, and they have accumulated sufficient political experience to understand that without the "dozen" tried and talented leaders (and talented men are not born by the hundreds), professionally trained, schooled by long experience, and working in perfect harmony, no class in modern society can wage a determined struggle. The Germans too have had demagogues in their ranks who have flattered the "hundred fools", exalted them above the "dozen wise men", extolled the "horny hand" of the masses, and (like Most and Hasselmann) have spurred them on to reckless "revolutionary" action and sown distrust towards the firm and steadfast leaders. It was only by stubbornly and relentlessly combating all demagogic elements within the socialist movement that German socialism has managed to grow and become as strong as it is. Our wiseacres, however, at a time when Russian Social-Democracy is passing through a crisis entirely due to the lack of sufficiently trained, developed, and experienced leaders to guide the spontaneously awakening masses, cry out ,with the profundity of fools: "It is a bad business when the movement does not proceed from the rank and file."

"A committee of students is of no use; it is not stable." Quite true. But the conclusion to be drawn from this is that we must have a committee of professional *revolutionaries* , and it is immaterial whether a student or a worker is capable of becoming a professional revolutionary. The conclusion you draw, how. ever, is that the working-class movement must not be pushed on from outside! In your political innocence you fail to notice that you are playing into the hands of our Economists and fostering our amateurism. Wherein, may I ask, did our students "push on" our workers? *In the sense* that the student brought to the worker the fragments of political knowledge he himself possesses, the crumbs of socialist ideas he has managed to acquire (for the principal intellectual diet of the present-day student, legal Marxism, could furnish only the rudiments, only scraps of knowledge). There has never been too much of *such* "pushing on from outside"; on the contrary, there has so far been all too little of it in our movement, for we have been stewing too assiduously in our own juice; we

have bowed far too slavishly to the elementary "economic struggle of the workers against the employers and the government". We professional revolutionaries must and will make it our business to engage in *this kind* of "pushing on" a hundred times more forcibly than we have done hitherto. But the very fact that you select so hideous a phrase as "pushing on from outside" — a phrase which cannot but rouse in the workers (at least in the workers who are as unenlightened as you yourselves) a sense of distrust towards *all* who bring them political knowledge and revolutionary experience from outside, which cannot but rouse in them an instinctive desire to resist *all* such people — proves you to be demagogues, and *demagogues* are the worst enemies of the working class.

And, please — don't hasten howling about my " uncomradely methods" of debating. I have not the least desire to doubt the purity of your intentions. As I have said, one may become a demagogue out of sheer political innocence. But I have shown that you have descended to demagogy, and I will never tire of repeating that demagogues are the worst enemies of the working class. The worst enemies, because they arouse base instincts in the masses, because the unenlightened worker is unable to recognize his enemies in men who represent themselves, and sometimes sincerely so, as his friends. The worst enemies, because in the period of disunity and vacillation, when our movement is just beginning to take shape, nothing is easier than to employ demagogic methods to mislead the masses, who can realize their error only later by bitter experience. That is why the slogan of the day for the Russian Social-Democrat must be — resolute struggle against Svoboda and *Rabocheye Dyelo* , both of which have sunk to the level of demagogy. We shall deal with this further in greater detail. [101]

"A dozen wise men can be more easily wiped out than a hundred fools." This wonderful truth (for which the hundred fools will always applaud you) appears obvious only because in the very midst of the argument you have skipped from one question to another. You began by talking and continued to talk of the unearthing of a "committee", of the unearthing of an "organization", and now you skip to the question of unearthing the movement's "roots" in their "depths". The fact is, of course, that our movement cannot be unearthed, for the very reason that it has countless

thousands of roots deep down among the masses; but that is not the point at issue. As far as “deep roots” are concerned, we cannot be “unearthed” even now, despite all our amateurism, and yet we all complain, and cannot but complain, that the “ *organizations* ” are being unearthed and as a result it is impossible to maintain continuity in the movement. But since you raise the question of *organizations* being unearthed and persist in your opinion, I assert that it is far more difficult to unearth a dozen wise men than a hundred fools. This position I will defend, no matter how much you instigate the masses against me for my “anti-democratic” views, etc. As I have stated repeatedly, by “wise men”, in connection with organization, I mean *professional revolutionaries* , irrespective of whether they have developed from among students or working men. I assert: (1) that no revolutionary movement can endure without a stable organization of leaders maintaining continuity; (2) that the broader the popular mass drawn spontaneously into the struggle, which forms the basis of the movement and participates in it, the more urgent the need for such an organization, and the more solid this organization must be (for it is much easier for all sorts of demagogues to side-track the more backward sections of the masses); (3) that such an organization must consist chiefly of people professionally engaged in revolutionary activity; (4) that in an autocratic state, the more we *confine* the membership of such an organization to people who are professionally engaged in revolutionary activity and who have been professionally trained in the art of combating the political police, the more difficult will it be to unearth the organization; and (5) the *greater* will be the number of people from the working class and from the other social classes who will be able to join the movement and perform active work in it.

I invite our Economists, terrorists, and “Economists-terrorists” [102] to disprove these propositions. At the moment, I shall deal only with the last two points. The question as to whether it is easier to wipe out “a dozen wisemen” or “a hundred fools” reduces itself to the question, above considered, whether it is possible to have a mass *organization* when the maintenance of strict secrecy is essential. We can never give a mass organization that degree of secrecy without which there can be no question of persistent and continuous struggle against the government. To concentrate all secret functions in the hands of as small a number of

professional revolutionaries as possible does not mean that the latter will "do the thinking for all" and that the rank and file will not take an active part in the *movement* . On the contrary, the membership will promote increasing numbers of the professional revolutionaries from its ranks; for it will know that it is not enough for a few students and for a few working men waging the economic struggle to gather in order to form a "committee", but that it takes years to train oneself to be a professional revolutionary; and the rank and file will "think", not only of amateurish methods, but of such training. Centralization of the secret functions of the *organization* by no means implies centralization of all the functions of the *movement* . Active participation of the widest masses in the illegal press will not diminish because a "dozen" professional revolutionaries centralize the secret functions connected with this work; on the contrary, it will *increase* tenfold. In this way, and in this way alone, shall we ensure that reading the illegal press, writing for it, and to some extent even distributing it, will *almost cease to be secret work* , for the police will soon come to realize the folly and impossibility of judicial and administrative red-tape procedure over every copy of a publication that is being distributed in the thousands. This holds not only for the press, but for every function of the movement, even for demonstrations. The active and widespread participation of the masses will not suffer; on the contrary, it will benefit by the fact that a "dozen" experienced revolutionaries, trained professionally no less than the police, will centralize all the secret aspects of the work — the drawing up of leaflets, the working out of approximate plans; and the appointing of bodies of leaders for each urban district, for each institution, etc. (I know that exception will be taken to my "undemocratic" views, but I shall reply below fully to this anything but intelligent objection.) Centralization of the most secret functions in an organization of revolutionaries will not diminish, but rather increase the extent and enhance the quality of the activity of a large number of other organizations that are intended for a broad public and are therefore as loose and as non-secret as possible, such as workers' trade unions; workers' self-education circles and circles for reading illegal literature; and socialist, as well as democratic, circles among *all* other sections of the population; etc., etc. We must have such circles, trade unions, and organizations everywhere in *as large a number as possible* and with the widest variety of functions; but it would be absurd and harmful *to confound* them with the organization of

revolutionaries , to efface the border-line between them, to make still more hazy the all too faint recognition of the fact that in order to "serve" the mass movement we must have people who will devote themselves exclusively to Social-Democratic activities, and that such people must *train* themselves patiently and steadfastly to be professional revolutionaries.

Yes, this recognition is incredibly dim. Our worst sin with regard to organization consists in the fact that by *our primitiveness we have lowered the prestige of revolutionaries in Russia* . A person who is flabby and shaky on questions of theory, who has a narrow outlook, who pleads the spontaneity of the masses as an excuse for his own sluggishness, who resembles a trade union secretary more than a spokesman of the people, who is unable to conceive of a broad and bold plan that would command the respect even of opponents, and who is inexperienced and clumsy in his own professional art — the art of combating the political police — such a man is not a revolutionary, but a wretched amateur!

Let no active worker take offense at these frank remarks, for as far as insufficient training is concerned, I apply them first and foremost to myself. I used to work in a study circle [103] that set itself very broad, all-embracing tasks; and all of us, members of that circle, suffered painfully and acutely from the realization that we were acting as amateurs at a moment in history when we might have been able to say, varying a well-known statement: "Give us an organization of revolutionaries, and we will overturn Russia" The more I recall the burning sense of shame I then experienced, the bitterer become my feelings towards those pseudo-Social-Democrats whose preachings "bring disgrace on the calling of a revolutionary", who fail to understand that our task is not to champion the degrading of the revolutionary to the level of an amateur, but to *raise* the amateurs to the level of revolutionaries.

D. The Scope of Organizational Work

We have heard B-v tell us about “the lack of revolutionary forces fit for action which is felt not only in St. Petersburg, but throughout Russia”. Hardly anyone will dispute this fact. But the question is, how is it to be explained? B-v writes:

“We shall not go into an explanation of the historical causes of this phenomenon; we shall merely state that a society, demoralized by prolonged political reaction and split by past and present economic changes, promotes from its own ranks an *extremely small number of persons fit for revolutionary work* ; that the working class does produce revolutionary workers who to some extent reinforce the ranks of the illegal organizations, but that the number of such revolutionaries is inadequate to meet the requirements of the times. This is all the more so because the worker who spends eleven and a half hours a day in the factory is in such a position that he can, in the main, perform only the functions of an agitator; but propaganda and organization, the delivery and reproduction of illegal literature, the issuance of leaflets, etc., are duties which must necessarily fall mainly upon the shoulders of an extremely small force of intellectuals” (*Rabocheye Dyelo* , No. 6, pp. 38-39).

On many points we disagree with B-v, particularly with those we have emphasized, which most saliently reveal that, although weary of our amateurism (as is every thinking practical worker), B-v cannot find the way out of this intolerable situation because he is weighted down by Economism. The fact is that society produces very *many* people fit for “the cause”, but we are unable to make use of them all. The critical, transitional state of our movement in this respect may be formulated as follows: *There are no people — yet there is a mass of people* . There is a mass of people, because the working class and increasingly varied social strata, year after year, produce from their ranks an increasing number of discontented people who desire to protest, who are ready to render all the assistance they can in the struggle against absolutism, the intolerableness of which, though not yet recognized by all, is more and more acutely sensed by increasing masses of the people. At the same time, we have no people, because we have no leaders, no political leaders, no talented organizers capable of arranging. extensive and at the same time uniform and harmonious work that would

employ all forces, even the most inconsiderable. “The growth and development of the revolutionary organizations” lag, not only behind the growth of the working-class movement, which even B-v admits, but behind that of the general democratic movement among all strata of the people. (In passing, probably B-V would now regard this as supplementing his conclusion.) The scope of revolutionary work is too narrow, as compared with the breadth of the spontaneous basis of the movement. It is too hemmed in by the wretched theory of “economic struggle against the employers and the government”. Yet, at the present time, not only Social-Democratic political agitators, but Social-Democratic organizers must “go among all classes of the population”. [104] There is hardly a single practical worker who will doubt that the Social-Democrats could distribute the thousand and one minute functions of their organizational work among individual representatives of the most varied classes. Lack of specialization is one of the most serious defects of our technique, about which B-v justly and bitterly complains. The smaller each separate “operation” in our common cause the more people we can find capable of carrying out such operations (people who, in the majority of cases, are completely incapable of becoming professional revolutionaries); more difficult will it be for the police to “net” all these “detail workers”, and the more difficult will it be for them to frame up, out of an arrest for some petty affair, a “case” that would justify the government’s expenditure on “security”. As for the number of people ready to help us, we referred in the preceding chapter to the gigantic change that has taken place in this respect in the last five years or so. On the other hand, in order to unite all these tiny fractions into one whole, in order not to break up the movement while breaking up its functions, and in order to imbue the people who carry out the minute functions with the conviction that their work is necessary and important, without which conviction they will never do the work, [105] it is necessary to have a strong organization of tried revolutionaries. The more secret such an organization is, the stronger and more widespread will be the confidence in the Party. As we know, in time of war, it is not only of the utmost importance to imbue one’s own army with confidence in its strength, but it is also important to convince the enemy and all *neutral* elements of this strength; friendly neutrality may sometimes decide the issue. If such an organization existed, one built up on a firm theoretical foundation and possessing a Social-Democratic organ, we should have no reason to fear

that the movement might be diverted from its path by the numerous "outside" elements that are attracted to it. (On the contrary, it is precisely at the present time, with amateurism prevalent, that we see many Social-Democrats leaning towards the *Credo* and only imagining that they are Social Democrats.) In a word, specialization necessarily presupposes centralization, and in turn imperatively calls for it.

But B-v himself, who has so excellently described the necessity for specialization, underestimates its importance, in our opinion, in the second part of the argument we have quoted. The number of working-class revolutionaries is inadequate, he says. This is perfectly true, and once again we stress that the "valuable communication of a close observer" fully confirms our view of the causes of the present crisis in Social-Democracy, and, consequently, of the means required to overcome it. Not only are revolutionaries in general lagging behind the spontaneous awakening of the masses, but even worker-revolutionaries are lagging behind the spontaneous awakening of the working-class masses. This *fact* confirms with clear evidence, from the "practical" point of view, too, not only the absurdity but even the *politically reactionary nature* of the "pedagogics" to which we are so often treated in the discussion of our duties to the workers. This fact proves that our very first and most pressing duty is to help to train working-class revolutionaries who will he on the same level *in regard to Party activity* as the revolutionaries from amongst the intellectuals (we emphasize the words "in regard to Party activity", for, although necessary, it is neither so easy nor so pressingly necessary to bring the workers up to the level of intellectuals in other respects). Attention, therefore, must be devoted *principally to raising* the workers to the level of revolutionaries; it is not at all our task *to descend* to the level of the "working masses" as the Economists wish to do, or to the level of the "average worker" as *Svoboda* desires to do (and by this ascends to the second grade of Economist "pedagogics"). I am far from denying the necessity for popular literature for the workers, and especially popular (of course, not vulgar) literature for the especially backward workers. But what annoys me is this constant confusion of pedagogics with questions of politics and organization. You, gentlemen , who are so much concerned about the "average worker", as a matter of fact, rather insult the workers by your desire *to talk down* to them when discussing working-class politics and working-class organization.

Talk about serious things in a serious manner; leave pedagogics to the pedagogues, and not to politicians and organizers! Are there not advanced people, “average people”, and “masses” among the intelligentsia too? Does not everyone recognize that popular literature is also required for the intelligentsia, and is not such literature written? Imagine someone, in an article on organizing college or high-school students, repeating over and over again, as if he had made a new discovery, that first of all we must have an organization of “average students”. The author of such an article would be ridiculed, and rightly so. Give us your ideas on organization, if you have any, he would be told, and we ourselves will decide who is “average”, who above average, and who below. But if you have no organizational ideas *of your own* , then all your exertions on behalf of the “masses” and “average people” will be simply boring. You must realize that these questions of “politics” and “organization” are so serious in themselves that they cannot be dealt with in any other but a serious way. We can and must *educate* workers (and university and Gymnasium students) so that we *may be able to discuss* these questions with them. But once you do bring up these questions, you must give real replies to them; do not fall back on the “average”, or on the “masses”; do not try to dispose of the matter with facetious remarks and mere phrases. [106]

To be fully prepared for his task, the worker-revolutionary must likewise become a professional revolutionary. Hence B-v is wrong in saying that since the worker spends eleven and a half hours in the factory, the brunt of all other revolutionary functions (apart from agitation) “ *must necessarily* fall mainly upon the shoulders of an extremely small force of intellectuals” . But this condition does not obtain out of sheer “necessity”. It obtains because we are backward, because we do not recognize our duty to assist every capable worker to become a *professional* agitator, organizer, propagandist, literature distributor, etc., etc. In this respect, we waste our strength in a positively shameful manner; we lack the ability to husband that which should be tended and reared with special care. Look at the Germans: their forces are a hundredfold greater than ours. But they understand perfectly well that really capable agitators, etc., are not often promoted from the ranks of the “average”. For this reason they immediately try to place every capable working man in conditions that will enable him to develop and apply his abilities to the fullest: he is made a professional agitator, he is

encouraged to widen the field of his activity, to spread it from one factory to the whole of the industry, from a single locality to the whole country. He acquires experience and dexterity in his profession; he broadens his outlook and increases his knowledge; he observes at close quarters the prominent political leaders from other localities and of other parties; he strives to rise to their level and combine in himself the knowledge of the working-class environment and the freshness of socialist convictions with professional skill, without which. the proletariat *cannot* wage a stubborn struggle against its excellently trained enemies. In this way alone do the working masses produce men of the stamp of Bebel and Auer. But what is to a great extent automatic in a politically free country must in Russia be done deliberately and systematically by our organizations. A worker-agitator who is at all gifted and "promising" *must not be left* to work eleven hours a day in a factory. We must arrange that he be maintained by the Party; that he may go underground in good time; that he change the place of his activity, if he is to enlarge his experience, widen his outlook, and be able to hold out for at least a few years in the struggle against the gendarmes. As the spontaneous rise of their movement becomes broader and deeper, the working-class masses promote from their ranks not only an increasing number of talented agitators, but also talented organizers, propagandists, and "practical workers" in the best sense of the term (of whom there are so few among our intellectuals who, for the most part, in the Russian manner, are somewhat careless and sluggish in their habits). When we have forces of specially trained worker-revolutionaries who have gone through extensive preparation (and, of course, revolutionaries "of all arms of the service"), no political police in the world will then be able to contend with them, for these forces, boundlessly devoted to the revolution, will enjoy the boundless confidence of the widest masses of the workers. We are directly to *blame* for doing too little to "stimulate" the workers to take this path, common to them and to the "intellectuals", of professional revolutionary training, and for all too often dragging them back by our silly speeches about what is "accessible" to the masses of the workers, to the "average workers", etc.

In this, as in other respects, the narrow scope of our organizational work is without a doubt due directly to the fact (although the overwhelming majority of the "Economists" and the novices in practical work do not perceive it) that we restrict our theories and our political tasks to a narrow

field. Subservience to spontaneity seems to inspire a fear of taking even one step away from what is "accessible" to the masses, a fear of rising too high above mere attendance on the immediate and direct requirements of the masses. Have no fear, gentlemen! Remember that we stand so low on the plane of organization that the very idea that we could rise *too* high is absurd!

E. "Conspiratorial" Organization and "Democratism"

Yet there are many people among us who are so sensitive to the "voice of life" that they fear it more than anything in the world and charge the adherents of the views here expounded with following a Narodnaya Volya line, with failing to understand "democratism", etc. These accusations, which, of course, have been echoed by *Rabocheye Dyelo* , need to be dealt with.

The writer of these lines knows very well that the St. Petersburg Economists leveled the charge of Narodnaya Volya tendencies also against *Rabochaya Gazeta* (which is quite understandable when one compares it with *Rabochaya Mysl*). We were not in the least surprised, therefore, when, soon after the appearance of *Iskra* , a comrade informed us that the Social-Democrats in the town of X describe *Iskra* as a Narodnaya Volya organ. We, of course, were flattered by this accusation; for what decent Social-Democrat has not been accused by the Economists of being a Narodnaya Volya sympathizer?

These accusations are the result of a twofold misunderstanding. First, the history of the revolutionary movement is so little known among us that the name "Narodnaya Volya" is used to denote any idea of a militant centralized organization which declares determined war upon tsarism. But the magnificent organization that the revolutionaries had in the seventies, and that should serve us as a model, was not established by the Narodnaya Volya, but by the *Zemlya i Volya* , which split up into the Chorny Peredel and the Narodnaya Volya. Consequently, to regard a militant revolutionary

organization as something specifically Narodnaya Volya in character is absurd both historically and logically; for *no* revolutionary trend, if it seriously thinks of struggle, can dispense with such an organization. The mistake the Narodnaya Volya committed was not in striving to enlist all the discontented in the organization and to direct this organization to resolute struggle against the autocracy; on the contrary, that was its great historical merit. The mistake was in relying on a theory which in substance was not a revolutionary theory at all, and the Narodnaya Volya members either did not know how, or were unable, to link their movement inseparably with the class struggle in the developing capitalist society. Only a gross failure to understand Marxism (or an "understanding" of it in the spirit of "Struveism") could prompt the opinion that the rise of a mass, spontaneous working-class movement *relieves* us of the duty of creating as good an organization of revolutionaries as the Zemlya i Volya had, or, indeed, an incomparably better one. On the contrary, this movement *imposes* the duty upon us; for the spontaneous struggle of the proletariat will not become its genuine "class struggle" until this struggle is led by a strong organization of revolutionaries.

Secondly, many people, including apparently B. Krichevsky (*Rabocheye Dyelo* , No. 10, p. 18), misunderstand the polemics that Social-Democrats have always waged against the "conspiratorial" view of the political struggle. We have always protested, and will, of course, continue to protest against *confining* the political struggle to conspiracy. [107] But this does not, of course, mean that we deny the need for a strong revolutionary organization. Thus, in the pamphlet mentioned in the preceding footnote, after the polemics against reducing the political struggle to a conspiracy, a description is given (as a Social-Democratic ideal) of an organization so strong as to be able to "resort to. . .rebellion" and to every other form of attack, in order to "deliver a smashing blow against absolutism". [108] In *form* such a strong revolutionary organization in an autocratic country may also be described as a "conspiratorial" organization, because the French word "conspiration" is the equivalent of the Russian word " *zagovar* " ("conspiracy"), and such an organization must have the utmost secrecy. Secrecy is such a necessary condition for this kind of organization that all the other conditions (number and selection of members, functions, etc.) must be made to conform to it. It would be extremely naive indeed,

therefore, to fear the charge that we Social-Democrats desire to create a conspiratorial organization. Such a charge should be as flattering to every opponent of Economism as the charge of following a Narodnaya Volya line.

The objection may be raised that such a powerful and strictly secret organization, which concentrates in its hands all the threads of secret activities, an organization which of necessity is centralized, may too easily rush into a premature attack, may thoughtlessly intensify the movement before the growth of political discontent, the intensity of the ferment and anger of the working class, etc., have made such an attack possible and necessary. Our reply to this is: Speaking abstractly, it cannot be denied, of course, that a militant organization may thoughtlessly engage in battle, which *may* end in a defeat entirely avoidable under other conditions. But we cannot confine ourselves to abstract reasoning on such a question, because every battle bears within itself the abstract possibility of defeat, and there is no way of *reducing* this possibility except by organized preparation for battle. If, however, we proceed from the concrete conditions at present being obtained in Russia, we must come to the positive conclusion that a strong revolutionary organization is absolutely necessary precisely for the purpose of giving stability to the movement and of *safeguarding* it against the possibility of making thoughtless attacks. Precisely at the present time, when no such organization yet exists, and when the revolutionary movement is rapidly and spontaneously growing, we *already observe* two opposite extremes (which, as is to be expected, "meet"). These are: the utterly unsound Economism and the preaching of moderation, and the equally unsound "excitative terror", which strives "artificially to call forth symptoms of the end of the movement, which is developing and strengthening itself, when this movement is as yet nearer to the start than to the end" (V. Zasulich, in *Zarya* , No. 2-3, p. 353). And the instance of *Rabocheye Dyelo* shows that *there* exist Social-Democrats who give way to both these extremes. This is not surprising, for, apart from other reasons, the "economic struggle against the employers and the government" can *never* satisfy revolutionaries, and opposite extremes will therefore always appear here and there. Only a centralized, militant organization that consistently carries out a Social-Democratic policy, that satisfies, so to speak, all revolutionary instincts and strivings, can safeguard the movement

against making thoughtless attacks and prepare attacks that hold out the promise of success.

A further objection may be raised, that the views on organization here expounded contradict the "democratic principle". Now, while the earlier accusation was specifically Russian in origin, this one *is specifically foreign* in character. And only an organization abroad (the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad) was capable of giving its Editorial Board instructions like the following:

" *Organizational Principle.* In order to secure the successful development and unification of Social-Democracy, the broad democratic principle of Party organization must be emphasized, developed, and fought for; this is particularly necessary in view of the anti-democratic tendencies that have revealed themselves in the ranks of our Party" (*Two Conferences* , p. 18).

We shall see in the next chapter how *Rabocheye Dyelo* combats *Iskra* 's "anti-democratic tendencies" . For the present, we shall examine more closely the "principle" that the Economists advance. Everyone will probably agree that "the broad democratic principle" presupposes the two following conditions: first, full publicity, and secondly, election to all offices. It would be absurd to speak of democracy without publicity, moreover, without publicity that is not limited to the membership of the organization. We call the German Socialist Party a democratic organization because all its activities are carried out publicly; even its party congresses are held in public. But no one would call an organization democratic that is hidden from everyone but its members by a veil of secrecy. What is the use, then, of advancing "the *broad* democratic principle" when the fundamental condition for this principle *cannot be fulfilled* by a secret organization? "The broad principle" proves itself simply to be a resounding but hollow phrase. Moreover, it reveals a total lack of understanding of the urgent tasks of the moment in regard to organization. Everyone knows how great the lack of secrecy is among the "broad" masses of our revolutionaries. We have heard the bitter complaints of B-v on this score and his absolutely just demand for a "strict selection of members" (*Rabocheye Dyelo* , No. 6, p. 42). Yet, persons who boast a keen "sense of realities " *urge* , in a situation

like this, not the strictest secrecy and the strictest (consequently, more restricted) selection of members, but " *the broad* democratic principle"! This is what you call being wide of the mark.

Nor is the situation any better with regard to the second attribute of democracy, the principle of election. In politically free countries, this condition is taken for granted. "They are members of the Party who accept the principles of the Party programme and render the Party all possible support," reads Clause 1 of the Rules of the German Social-Democratic Party. Since the entire political arena is as open to the public view as is a theater stage to the audience, this acceptance or non-acceptance, support or opposition, is known to all from the press and from public meetings. Everyone knows that a certain political figure began in such and such a way, passed through such and such an evolution, behaved in a trying moment in such and such a manner, and possesses such and such qualities; consequently, *all* party members, knowing all the facts, can elect or refuse to elect this person to a particular party office. The general control (in the literal sense of the term) exercised over every act of a party man in the political field brings into existence an automatically operating mechanism which produces what in biology is called the "survival of the fittest". "Natural selection" by full publicity, election, and general control provides the assurance that, in the last analysis, every political figure will be "in his proper place", do the work for which lie is best fitted by his powers and abilities, feel the effects of his mistakes on himself, and prove before all the world his ability to recognize mistakes and to avoid them.

Try to fit this picture into the frame of our autocracy! Is it conceivable in Russia for all who accept the principles of the Party programme and render the Party all possible support to control every action of the revolutionary working in secret? Is it possible for all to elect one of these revolutionaries to any particular office, when, in the very interests of the work, the revolutionary must conceal his identity from nine out of ten of these "all"? Reflect somewhat over the real meaning of the high-sounding phrases to which *Rabocheye Dyelo* gives utterance, and you will realize that "broad democracy" in Party organization, amidst the gloom of the autocracy and the domination of gendarmerie, is nothing more than a *useless and harmful*

toy. It is a useless toy because, in point of fact, no revolutionary organization has ever practiced, or could practice, *broad* democracy, however much it may have desired to do so. It is a harmful toy because any attempt to practice "the broad democratic principle" will simply facilitate the work of the police in carrying out large-scale raids, will perpetuate the prevailing primitiveness, and will divert the thoughts of the practical workers from the serious and pressing task of training themselves to become professional revolutionaries to that of drawing up detailed "paper" rules for election systems. Only abroad, where very often people with no opportunity for conducting really active work gather, could this "playing at democracy" develop here and there, especially in small groups.

To show the unseemliness of *Rabocheye Dyelo* 's favorite trick of advancing the plausible "principle" of democracy in revolutionary affairs, we shall again summon a witness. This witness, Y. Serebryakov, editor of the London magazine, *Nakanune* , has a soft spot for *Rabocheye Dyelo* and is filled with a great hatred for Plekhanov and the " Plekhanovites ". In its articles on the split in the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad, *Nakanune* definitely sided with *Rabocheye Dyelo* and poured a stream of petty abuse upon Plekhanov. All the more valuable, therefore, is this witness in the question at issue. In *Nakanune* for July (No. 7) 1899, an article entitled "Concerning the Manifesto of the Self-Emancipation of the Workers Group", Serebryakov argued that it was "indecent" to talk about such things as "self-deception, leadership, and the so-called Areopagus in a serious revolutionary movement" and, *inter alia* , wrote:

"Myshkin, Rogachov, Zhelyabov, Mikhailov, Perovskaya, Figner, and others never regarded themselves as leaders, and no one ever elected or appointed them as such, although in actuality, they were leaders, because, in the propaganda period, as well as in the period of the struggle against the government, they took the brunt of the work upon themselves, they went into the most dangerous places, and their activities were the most fruitful. They became leaders, not because they wished it , but because the comrades surrounding them had confidence in their wisdom, in their energy, in their loyalty. To be afraid of some kind of Areopagus (if it is not feared, why

write about it?) that would arbitrarily govern the movement is far too naive. Who would pay heed to it?"

We ask the reader, in what way does the "Areopagus" differ from "anti democratic tendencies"? And is it not evident that *Rabocheye Dyelo* 's "plausible" organizational principle is equally naive and indecent; naive, because no one would pay heed to the "Areopagus", or people with "anti-democratic tendencies", if "the comrades surrounding them had" no "confidence in their wisdom, energy, and loyalty"; indecent, because it is a demagogic sally calculated to play on the conceit of some, on the ignorance of others regarding the actual state of our movement, and on the lack of training and the ignorance of the history of the revolutionary movement on the part of still others. The only serious organizational principle for the active workers of our movement should be the strictest secrecy, the strictest selection of members, and the training of professional revolutionaries. Given these qualities, something even more than "democratism" would be guaranteed to us, namely, complete, comradely, mutual confidence among revolutionaries. This is absolutely essential for us, because there can be no question of replacing it by general democratic control in Russia. It would be a great mistake to believe that the impossibility of establishing real "democratic" control renders the members of the revolutionary organization beyond control altogether. They have not the time to think about toy forms of democratism (democratism within a close and compact body of comrades in which complete, mutual confidence prevails), but they have a lively sense of their *responsibility* , knowing as they do from experience that an organization of real revolutionaries will stop at nothing to rid itself of an unworthy member. Moreover, there is a fairly well-developed public opinion in Russian (and international) revolutionary circles which has a long history behind it, and which sternly and ruthlessly punishes every departure from the duties of comradeship (and "democratism", real and not toy democratism, certainly forms a component part of the conception of comradeship). Take all this into consideration and you will realize that this talk and these resolutions about "anti-democratic tendencies" have the musty odor of the playing at generals which is indulged abroad.

It must be observed also that the other source of this talk, viz., naivete is likewise fostered by the confusion of ideas concerning the meaning of democracy. In Mr. and Mrs. Webb's book on the English trade unions there is an interesting chapter entitled "Primitive Democracy". In it the authors relate how the English workers, in the first period of existence of their unions, considered it an indispensable sign of democracy for all the members to do all the work of managing the unions; not only were all questions decided by the vote of all the members, but all official duties were fulfilled by all the members in turn. A long period of historical experience was required for workers to realize the absurdity of such a conception of democracy and to make them understand the necessity for representative institutions, on the one hand, and for full-time officials, on the other. Only after a number of cases of financial bankruptcy of trade union treasuries had occurred did the workers realize that the rates of contributions and benefits cannot be decided merely by a democratic vote, but that this also requires the advice of insurance experts. Let us also take Kautsky's book on parliamentarism and legislation by the people. There we find that the conclusions drawn by the Marxist theoretician coincide with the lessons learned from many years of practical experience by the workers who organized "spontaneously". Kautsky strongly protests against Rittinghausen's primitive conception of democracy; he ridicules those who in the name of democracy demand that "popular newspapers shall be edited directly by the people"; he shows the' need for *professional* journalists, parliamentarians, etc., for the Social-Democratic leadership of the proletarian class struggle; he attacks the socialism of anarchists and *litterateurs* who in their "striving for effect" extol direct legislation by the whole people, completely failing to understand that this idea can be applied only relatively in modern society.

Those who have performed practical work in our movement know how widespread the "primitive" conception of democracy is among the masses of the students and workers. It is not surprising that this conception penetrates also into rules of organizations and into literature. The Economists of the Bernsteinian persuasion included in their rules the following: "§ 10. All affairs affecting the interests of the whole of the union organization shall be decided by a majority vote of all its members." The

Economists of the terrorist persuasion repeat after them. “The decisions of the committee shall become effective only after they have been referred to all the circles” *(Svoboda* , No. 1, p. 67). Observe that this proposal for a widely applied referendum is advanced *in addition* to the demand that *the whole of* the organization be built on an elective basis! We would not, of course, on this account condemn practical workers who have had too few opportunities for studying the theory and practice of real democratic organizations. But when *Rabocheye Dyelo* , which lays claim to leadership, confines itself, under such conditions, to a resolution on broad democratic principles, can this be described as anything but a mere “striving for effect”?

F. Local and All-Russia Work

The objections raised against the plan of organization here outlined on the grounds that it is undemocratic and conspiratorial are totally unsound. Nevertheless, there remains a question which is frequently asked and which deserves detailed examination. This is the question of the relations between local work and all-Russia work. Fears are expressed that the formation of a centralized organization may shift the center of gravity from the former to the latter, damage the movement through weakening our contacts with the working masses and the continuity of local agitation generally. To these fears we reply that our movement in the past few years has suffered precisely from the fact that local workers have been too absorbed in local work; that therefore it is absolutely necessary to shift the center of gravity somewhat to national work; and that, far from weakening this would strengthen our ties and the continuity of our local agitation. Let us take the question of central and local newspapers. I would ask the reader not to forget that we cite the publication of newspapers only as *an example* illustrating an immeasurably broader and more varied revolutionary activity in general.

In the first period of the mass movement (1896-98), an attempt was made by local revolutionary workers to publish an all-Russia paper — *Rabochaya Gazeta* . In the next period (1898-1900), the movement made an enormous

stride forward, but the attention of the leaders was wholly absorbed by local publications. If we compute the total number of the local papers that were published, we shall find that on the average one issue per month was published. [109] Does this not clearly illustrate our amateurism? Does this not clearly show that our revolutionary organization lags behind the spontaneous growth of the movement? If *the same number* of issues had been published, not by scattered local groups, but by a single organization, we would not only have saved an enormous amount of effort, but we would have secured immeasurably greater stability and continuity in our work. This simple point is frequently lost sight of by those practical workers who work *actively* and almost exclusively on local publications (unfortunately this is true even now in the overwhelming majority of cases), as well as by the publicists who display an astonishing quixotism on this question. The practical workers usually rest content with the argument that "it is difficult" [110] for local workers to engage in the organization of an all-Russia newspaper, and that local newspapers are better than no newspapers at all. This argument is, of course, perfectly just, and we, no less than any practical worker, appreciate the enormous importance and usefulness of local newspapers *in general.* But not this is the point. The point is, can we not overcome the fragmentation and primitiveness that are so glaringly expressed in the thirty issues of local newspapers that have been published throughout Russia in the course of two and a half years? Do not restrict yourselves to the indisputable, but too general, statement about the usefulness of local newspapers generally; have the courage frankly to admit their negative aspects revealed by the experience of two and a half years. This experience has shown that under the conditions in which we work, these local newspapers prove, in the majority of cases, to be unstable in their principles, devoid of political significance, extremely costly in regard to expenditure of revolutionary forces, and totally unsatisfactory from a technical point of view (I have in mind, of course, not the technique of printing, but the frequency and regularity of publication). These defects are riot accidental; they are the inevitable outcome of the fragmentation which, on the one hand, explains the predominance of local newspapers in the period under review, and, on the other, is *fostered by* this predominance. It is positively beyond the strength of a separate local organization to raise its newspaper to the level of a political organ maintaining stability of principles; it is *beyond its strength* to collect and utilize sufficient material

to shed light on the whole of our political life. The argument usually advanced to support the need for numerous local newspapers in free countries that the cost of printing by local workers is low and that the people can be kept more fully and quickly informed — this argument, as experience has shown, speaks *against* local newspapers in Russia. They turn out to be excessively costly in regard to the expenditure of revolutionary forces, and appear very rarely, for the simple reason that the publication of an *illegal* newspaper, however small its size, requires an extensive secret apparatus, such as is possible with large-scale factory production; for this apparatus cannot be created in a small, handicraft workshop. Very frequently, the primitiveness of the secret apparatus (every practical worker can cite numerous cases) enables the police to take advantage of the publication and distribution of one or two issues to make *mass* arrests, which result in such a clean sweep that it becomes necessary to start all over again. A well-organized secret apparatus requires professionally well-trained revolutionaries and a division of labor applied with the greatest consistency, but both these requirements are beyond the strength of a separate local organization, however strong it may be at any given moment. Not only the general interests of our movement as a whole (training of the workers in consistent socialist and political principles) but also specifically local interests are *better served by non-local newspapers* . This may seem paradoxical at first sight, but it has been proved to the hilt by the two and a half years of experience referred to. Everyone will agree that had all the local forces that were engaged in the publication of the thirty issues of newspapers worked on a single newspaper, sixty, if not a hundred, issues could easily have been published, with a fuller expression, in consequence, of all the specifically local features of the movement. True, it is no easy matter to attain such a degree of organization, but we must realize the need for it. Every local study circle must think about it and *work actively* to achieve it, without waiting for an impetus from outside, without being tempted by the popularity and closer proximity of a local newspaper which, as our revolutionary experience has shown, proves to a large extent to be illusory.

And it is a bad service indeed those publicists render to the practical work who, thinking themselves particularly (close to the practical workers, fail to see this illusoriness, and make shift with the astoundingly hollow and cheap

argument that we must have local newspapers, we must have district newspapers, and we must have all-Russia newspapers. Generally speaking, of course, all these are necessary, but once the solution of a concrete organizational problem is undertaken, surely time and circumstances must be taken into consideration. Is it not quixotic for *Svoboda* (No. 1, p. 68) to write in a special article "dealing with *the question of a newspaper* ": "It seems to us that every locality, with any appreciable number of workers, should have its own workers' newspaper; not a newspaper imported from somewhere, but its very own." If the publicist who wrote these words refuses to think of their meaning, then at least the reader may do it for him. How many scores, if not hundreds, of "localities" with any appreciable number of workers there are in Russia, and what a perpetuation of our amateurish methods this would mean if indeed every local organization set about publishing its own. newspaper! How this diffusion would facilitate the gendarmerie's task of netting — and without "any appreciable" effort — the local revolutionary workers at the very outset of their activity and of preventing them from developing into real revolutionaries. A reader of an all-Russia newspaper, continues the author, would find little interest in the descriptions of the. malpractices of the factory owners and the "details of factory life in various towns not his own". But "an inhabitant of Orel would not find Orel affairs dull reading. In every issue he would learn who had been 'picked for a lambasting' and who had been 'flayed', and he would be in high spirits" (p. 69). Certainly, the Orel reader is in high spirits, but our publicist's flights of imagination are also high — too high. He should have asked himself whether such concern with trivialities is tactically in order. We are second to none in appreciating the importance and necessity of factory exposures, but it must be borne in mind that we have reached a stage when St. Petersburg folk find it dull reading the St. Petersburg correspondence of the St. Petersburg *Rabochaya Mysl* . Leaflets are the medium through which local factory exposures have always been *and must continue* to be made, but we must raise the level of the *newspaper* , not lower it to the level of a factory leaflet. What we ask of a newspaper is not so much "petty" exposures, as exposures of the major, typical evils of factory life, exposures based on especially striking facts and capable, therefore, of arousing the interest of all workers and all leaders of the movement, of really enriching their knowledge, broadening their outlook,

and serving as a starting-point for awakening new districts and workers from ever-newer trade areas.

“Moreover, in a local newspaper, all the malpractices of the factory administration and other authorities may be denounced then and there. In the case of a general, distant newspaper, however, by the time the news reaches it the facts will have been forgotten in the source localities. The reader, on getting the paper, will exclaim: ’When was that-who remembers it?’” (*ibid* .). Precisely — who remembers it! From the same source we learn that the 30 issues of newspapers which appeared in the course of two and a half years were published in six cities. This averages *one issue per city per half-year* ! And even if our frivolous publicist *trebled* his estimate of the productivity of local work (which would be wrong in the case of an average town, since it is impossible to increase productivity to any considerable extent by our rule-of-thumb methods), we would still get only one issue every two months, i.e., nothing at all like “denouncing then and there”. It would suffice, however, for ten local organizations to combine and send their delegates to take an active part in organizing a general newspaper, to enable us every fortnight to “denounce”, over the *whole of Russia* , not petty, but really outstanding and typical evils. No one who knows the state of affairs in our organizations can have the slightest doubt on that score. As for catching the enemy red-handed — if we mean it seriously and not merely as a pretty phrase — that is quite beyond the ability of an illegal paper generally. It can be done only by a leaflet, because the time limit for exposures of that nature can be a day or two at the most (e.g., the usual brief strikes, violent factory clashes, demonstrations, etc.).

“The workers live not only at the factory, but also in the city,” continues our author, rising from the particular to the general, with a strict consistency that would have done honor to Boris Krichevsky himself; and he refers to matters like municipal councils, municipal hospitals, municipal schools, and demands that workers’ newspapers should not ignore municipal affairs in general.

This demand — excellent in itself — serves as a particularly vivid illustration of the empty abstraction to which discussions of local

newspapers are all too frequently limited. In the first place, if indeed newspapers appeared "in every locality with any appreciable number of workers" with such detailed information on municipal affairs as *Svoboda* desires, this would, under our Russian conditions, inevitably degenerate into actual concern with trivialities, lead to a weakening of the consciousness of the importance of an all-Russia revolutionary assault upon the tsarist autocracy, and strengthen the extremely virile shoots — not uprooted but rather hidden or temporarily suppressed — of the tendency that has become noted as a result of the famous remark about revolutionaries who talk a great deal about non-existent parliaments and too little about existent municipal councils. We say "inevitably", in order to emphasize that *Svoboda* obviously does not desire this, but the contrary, to come about. But good intentions are not enough. For municipal affairs to be dealt with in their proper perspective, in relation to our entire work, this perspective must *first* be clearly conceived, firmly established, not only by argument, but by numerous examples, so that it may acquire the stability of a *tradition* . This is still far from being the case with us. Yet this must be done *first* , before we can allow ourselves to think and talk about an extensive local press.

Secondly, to write really well and interestingly about municipal affairs, one must have first-hand knowledge, not book knowledge, of the issues. But there are hardly any Social-Democrats *anywhere in Russia* who possess such knowledge. To be able to write in newspapers (not in popular pamphlets) about municipal and state affairs, one must have fresh and varied material gathered and written up by able people. And in order to be able to gather and write up such material, we must have something more than the "primitive democracy" of a primitive circle, in which everybody does everything and all entertain themselves by playing at referendums. It is necessary to have a staff of expert writers and correspondents, an army of Social-Democratic reporters who establish contacts far and wide, who are able to fathom all sorts of "state secrets" (the knowledge of which makes the Russian government official so puffed up, but the blabbing of which is such an easy matter to him), who are able to penetrate "behind the scenes" — an army of' people who must, as their "official duty", be ubiquitous and omniscient. And we, the Party that fights against all economic, political, social, and national oppression, can and must find, gather, train, mobilize,

and set into motion such an army of omniscient people — all of which requires still to be done. Not only has not a single step in this direction been taken in the overwhelming majority of localities, but even the recognition of its necessity is very often lacking. One will search in vain in our Social-Democratic press for lively and interesting articles, correspondence, and exposures dealing with our big and little affairs — diplomatic, military, ecclesiastical, municipal, financial, etc., etc. There is *almost nothing* , or very little, about these matters. [111] That is why "it always annoys me frightfully when a man comes to me, utters beautiful and charming words" about the need for newspapers in "every locality with any appreciable number of workers" that will expose factory, municipal, and government evils.

The predominance of the local papers over a central press may be a sign of either poverty or luxury. Of poverty, when the movement has not yet developed the forces for large-scale production, continues to flounder in amateurism, and is all but swamped with "the petty details of factory life". Of luxury, when the movement *has fully mastered* the task of comprehensive exposure and comprehensive agitation, and it becomes necessary to publish numerous local newspapers in addition to the central organ. Let each decide for himself what the predominance of local newspapers implies in present-day Russia. I shall limit myself to a precise formulation of my own conclusion, to leave no grounds for misunderstanding. Hitherto, the majority of our local organizations have thought almost exclusively in terms of local newspapers, and have devoted almost all their activities to this work. This is abnormal; the very opposite should have been the case. The majority of the local organizations should think principally of the publication of an all-Russia newspaper and devote their activities chiefly to it. Until this is done, we shall not be able to establish a *single* newspaper capable, to any degree, of serving the movement with *comprehensive* press agitation. When this is done, however, normal relations between the necessary central newspaper and the necessary local newspapers will be established automatically.

It would seem at first glance that the conclusion on the necessity for shifting the center of gravity from local to all-Russia work does not apply to the sphere of the specifically economic struggle. In this struggle, the immediate enemies of the workers are the individual employers or groups of employers, who are not bound by any organization having even the remotest resemblance to the purely military, strictly centralized organization of the Russian Government — our immediate enemy in the political struggle — which is led in all its minutest details by a single will.

But that is not the case. As we have repeatedly pointed out, the economic struggle is a trade struggle, and for that reason it requires that the workers be organized according to trades, not only according to place of employment. Organization by trades becomes all the more urgently necessary, the more rapidly our employers organize in all sorts of companies and syndicates. Our fragmentation and our amateurism are an outright hindrance to this work of organization which requires the existence of a single, all-Russia body of revolutionaries capable of giving leadership to the all-Russia trade unions. We have described above the type of organization that is needed for this purpose; we shall now add but a few words on the question of our press in this connection.

Hardly anyone will doubt the necessity for every Social-Democratic newspaper to have a *special department* devoted to the trade union (economic) struggle. But the growth of the trade union movement compels us to think about the creation of a trade union press. It seems to us, however, that with rare exceptions, there can be no question of trade union newspapers in Russia at the present time; they would be a luxury, and many a time we lack even our daily bread. The form of trade union press that would suit the conditions of our illegal work and is already required at the present time is *trade union pamphlets.* In these pamphlets, *legal* [112] and illegal material should be gathered and grouped systematically, on the working conditions in a given trade, on the differences in this respect in the various parts of, Russia; on the main demands advanced by the workers in the given trade; on the inadequacies of legislation affecting that trade; on outstanding instances of economic struggle by the workers in the trade; on the beginnings, the present state, and the requirements of their trade union

organization, etc. Such pamphlets would, in the first place, relieve our Social-Democratic press of a mass of trade details that are of interest only to workers in the given trade. Secondly, they would record the results of our experience in the trade union struggle, they would preserve the gathered material, which now literally gets lost in a mass of leaflets and fragmentary correspondence; and they would summarize this material. Thirdly, they could serve as guides for agitators, because working conditions change relatively slow ly and the main demands of the workers in a given trade are extremely stable (cf., for example, the demands advanced by the weavers in the Moscow district in 1885 and in the St. Petersburg district in 1896). A compilation of such demands and needs might serve for years as an excellent handbook for agitators on economic questions in backward localities or among the backward strata of the workers. Examples of successful strikes in a given region, information on higher living standards, on improved working conditions, in one locality, would encourage the workers in other localities to take up the fight again and again. Fourthly, having made a start in generalizing the trade union struggle and in this way strengthening the link between the Russian trade union movement and socialism, the Social-Democrats would at the same time see to it that our trade union work occupied neither too small nor too large a place in our Social-Democratic work as a whole. A local organization that is cut off from organizations in other towns finds it very difficult, sometimes almost impossible, to maintain a correct sense of proportion (the example of *Rabochaya Mysl* shows what a monstrous exaggeration can be made in the direction of trade-unionism) But an all-Russia organization of revolutionaries that stands undeviatingly on the basis of Marxism, that leads the entire political struggle and possesses a staff of professional agitators, will never find it difficult to determine the proper proportion.

Chapter 5: The “Plan” for an All-Russia Political Newspaper

“The most serious blunder *Iskra* committed in this connection” writes B. Krichevsky (*Rabocheye Dyelo,* No. 10, p. 30), charging us with a tendency to “convert theory into a lifeless doctrine by isolating it from practice”, “was its ’plan’ for a general party organization” (viz., the article entitled “Where To Begin” [113]). Martynov echoes this idea in declaring that “ *Iskra* ’s tendency to belittle the significance of the forward march of the drab everyday struggle in comparison with the propaganda of brilliant and completed ideas ... was crowned with the plan for the organization of a party which it sets forth in the article entitled ’Where To Begin’ in issue No. 4” (ibid., p. 61). Finally, L. Nadezhdin has of late joined in the chorus of indignation against this “plan” (the quotation marks were meant to express sarcasm). In his pamphlet, which we have just received, entitled *The Eve of the Revolution* (published by the “Revolutionary-Socialist Group” *Svoboda* , whose acquaintance we have made), he declares (p. 126): “To speak now of an organization held together by an all-Russia newspaper means propagating armchair ideas and armchair work” and represents a manifestation of “bookishness”, etc.

That our terrorist turns out to be in agreement with the champions of the “forward march of the drab everyday struggle” is not surprising, since we have traced the roots of this intimacy between them in the chapters on politics and organization. But must draw attention here to the fact that Nadezhdin is the only one who has conscientiously tried to grasp the train of thought in an article he disliked and has made an attempt to reply to the point, whereas *Rabocheye Dyelo* , has said nothing that is material to the subject, but has tried merely to confuse the question by a series of unseemly, demagogic sallies. Unpleasant though the task may be, we must first spend some time in cleansing this Augean stable.

A. Who Was Offended By the Article "Where To Begin"

Let us present a small selection of the expletives and exclamations that *Rabocheye Dyelo* hurled at us. "It is not a newspaper that can create a party organization, but vice versa...." A newspaper, standing above the party, outside of its control, and independent of it, thanks to its having its own staff of agents. "By what miracle has *Iskra* forgotten about the actually existing Social-Democratic organizations of the party to which it belongs?...." "Those who possess firm principles and a corresponding plan are the supreme regulators of the real struggle of the party and dictate to it their plan...." "The plan drives our active and virile organizations into the kingdom of shadows and desires to call into being a fantastic network of agents...." "Were *Iskra's* plan carried into effect, every trace of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, which is taking shape, would be obliterated...." "A propagandist organ becomes an uncontrolled autocratic law-maker for the entire practical revolutionary struggle...." "How should our Party react to the suggestion that it be *completely* subordinated to an autonomous editorial board?", etc., etc.

As the reader can see from the contents and the tone of these above quotations, *Rabocheye Dyelo has taken offense.* Offense, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the organizations and committees of our Party which it alleges *Iskra* desires to drive into the kingdom of shadows and whose very traces it would obliterate. How terrible! But a curious thing should be noted. The article "Where To Begin" appeared in May 1901. The articles in *Rabocheye Dyelo* appeared in September 1901. Now we are in mid-January 1902. During these five months (prior to and after September), *not a single* committee and *not a single* organization of the Party protested formally against this monster that seeks to drive them into the kingdom of shadows; and yet scores and hundreds of communications from all parts of Russia have appeared during this period in *Iskra* , as well as in numerous local and non-local publications. How could it happen that those who would be driven into the realm of shadows are not aware of it and have not taken offense, though a third party has?

The explanation is that the committees and other organizations are engaged in real work and are not playing at "democracy". The committees read the article "Where To Begin", saw that it represented an attempt "to elaborate a definite plan for an organization, so *that its formation may be undertaken from all aspects";* and since they knew and saw very well that *not one* of these "sides" would dream of "setting about to build it" until it was convinced of its necessity, and of the correctness of the architectural plan, it has naturally never occurred to them to take offense at the boldness of the people who said in *Iskra* : "In view of the pressing importance of the question we, on our part, take the liberty of submitting to the comrades a skeleton plan to be developed in greater detail in a pamphlet now in preparation for the print." With a conscientious approach to the work, was it possible to view things otherwise than that if the comrades *accepted* the plan submitted to them, they would carry it out, not because they are "subordinate", but because they would be convinced of its necessity for our common cause, and that if they *did not accept it* , then the "skeleton" (a pretentious word, is it not?) would remain merely a skeleton? Is it not demagogy to fight against the skeleton of a plan, not only by "picking it to pieces" and advizing comrades to reject it, but by *inciting* people inexperienced in revolutionary matters against its authors *merely on the grounds* that they *dare* to "legislate" and come out as the "supreme regulators", i.e., because they dare *to propose* an outline of a plan? Can our Party develop and make progress if an attempt *to raise* local functionaries to broader views, tasks, plans, etc., is objected to, not only with the claim that these views are erroneous, but on the grounds that the very "desire" *to* " *raise* " us gives "offense"? Nadezhdin, too, "picked" our plan "to pieces", but he did not sink to such demagogy as cannot be explained solely by naivete or by primitiveness of political views. From the outset, he emphatically rejected the charge that we intended to establish an "inspectorship over the Party". That is why Nadezhdin's criticism of the plan can and should be answered on its merits, while *Rabocheye Dyelo* deserves only to be treated with contempt.

But contempt for a writer who sinks so low as to shout about autocracy and "subordination" does not relieve us of the duty of disentangling the confusion that such people create in the minds of their readers. Here we can

clearly demonstrate to the world the nature of catchwords like “broad democracy”. We are accused of forgetting the committees, of desiring or attempting to drive them into the kingdom of shadows, etc. How can we reply to these charges when, out of considerations of secrecy, we can give the reader *almost no facts* regarding our real relationships with the committees? Persons hurling vehement accusations calculated to provoke the crowd prove to be ahead of us because of their brazenness and their disregard of the duty of a revolutionary to conceal carefully from the eyes of the world the relationships and contacts which he maintains, which he is establishing or trying to establish. Naturally, we refuse once and for all to compete with such people in the field of “democratism”. As to the reader who is not initiated in all Party affairs, the only way in which we can discharge our duty to him is to acquaint him, not with what is and what is *im Werden* but with *a particle* of what has taken place and what may be told as a thing of the past.

The Bund hints that we are “impostors” [114] ; the Union Abroad accuses us of attempting to obliterate all traces of the Party. Gentlemen, you will get complete satisfaction when we relate to the public *four facts* concerning the past.

First fact. [115] The members of one of the Leagues of Struggle, who took a direct part in founding our Party and in sending a delegate to the Inaugural Party Congress, reached agreement with a member of the *Iskra* group regarding the publication of a series of books for workers that were to serve the entire movement. The attempt to publish the series failed and the pamphlets written for it, *The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats* and *The New Factory Law* , [116] by a circuitous course and through the medium of third parties, found their way abroad, where they were published. [117]

Second fact. Members of the Central Committee of the Bund approached a member of the *Iskra* group with the proposal to organize what the Bund then described as a “literary laboratory”. In making the proposal, they stated that unless this was done, the movement would greatly retrogress. The

result of these negotiations was the appearance of the pamphlet *The Working-Class Cause in Russia* . [118]

Third fact. The Central Committee of the Bund, via a provincial town, approached a member of the *Iskra* group with the proposal that he undertake the editing of the revived *Rabochaya Gazeta* and, of course, obtained his consent. The offer was later modified: the comrade in question was invited to act as a contributor, in view of a new plan for the composition of the Editorial Board. Also this proposal, of course, obtained his consent. [119] Articles were sent (which we managed to preserve): "Our Programme" which was a direct protest against Bernsteinism, against the change in the line of the legal literature and of *Rabochaya Mysl* ; "Our Immediate Task" ("to publish a Party organ that shall appear regularly and have close contacts with all the local groups", the drawbacks of the prevailing "amateurism"), "An Urgent Question" (an examination of the objection that it is necessary *first* to develop the activities of local groups before undertaking the publication of a common organ; an insistence on the paramount importance of a "revolutionary organization" and on the necessity of "developing organization, discipline, and the technique of secrecy to the highest degree of perfection"). [120] The proposal to resume publication of *Rabochaya Gazeta* was not carried out, and the articles were not published.

Fourth fact. A member of the committee that was organizing the second regular congress of our Party communicated to a member of the *Iskra* group the programme of the congress and proposed that group as editorial board of the revived *Rabochaya Gazeta* . This preliminary step, as it were, was later sanctioned by the committee to which this member belonged, and by the Central Committee of the Bund. [121] The *Iskra* group was notified of the place and time of the congress and (uncertain of being able, for certain reasons, to send a delegate) drew up a written report for the congress. In the report, the idea was suggested that the mere election of a Central Committee would not only fail to solve the question of unification at a time of such complete disorder as the present, but would even compromise the grand idea of establishing a party, in the event of an early, swift, and thorough police round-up, which was more than likely in view of

the prevailing lack of secrecy; that therefore, a beginning should be made by inviting all committees and all other organizations to support the revived common organ, which would establish *real* contacts between all the committees and *really* train a group of leaders for the entire movement; and that the committees and the Party would very easily be able to transform such a group into a Central Committee as soon as the group had grown and become strong. In consequence of a number of police raids and arrests, however, the congress could not take place. For security reasons the report was destroyed, having been read only by a few comrades, including the representatives of one committee.

Let the reader now judge for himself the character of the methods employed by the Bund in hinting that we were impostors, or by *Rabocheye Dyelo* , which accuses us of trying to relegate the committees to the kingdom of shadows and to "substitute" for the organization of a party an organization disseminating the ideas advocated by a single newspaper. It was to the committees, *on their repeated invitation* , that we reported on the necessity for adopting a definite plan of concerted activities. It was precisely for the Party organization that we elaborated this plan, in articles sent to *Rabochaya Gazeta* , and in the report to the Party congress, again on the invitation of those who held such an influential position in the Party that they took the initiative in its (actual) restoration. Only after the *twice* repeated attempts of the Party organization, *in conjunction with ourselves, officially to* revive the central organ of the Party had failed, did we consider it our bounden duty to publish an *unofficial* organ, in order that with the *third* attempt the comrades might have before them the results of *experience* and not merely conjectural proposals. Now certain results of this experience are present for all to see, and all comrades may now judge whether we properly understood our duties and what should be thought of people that strive to mislead those unacquainted with the immediate past, simply because they are piqued at our having pointed out to some their inconsistency on the "national" question, and to others the inadmissibility of their vacillation in matters of principle.

B. Can A Newspaper Be A Collective Organizer?

The quintessence of the article “Where To Begin” consists in the fact that it discusses *precisely* this question and gives an affirmative reply to it. As far as we know, the only attempt to examine this question on its merits and to prove that it must be answered in the negative was made by L. Nadezhdin, whose argument we reproduce in full:

“... It pleased us greatly to see *Iskra* (No. 4) present the question of the need for an all-Russia newspaper; but we cannot agree that this presentation bears relevance to the title ’Where To Begin’. Undoubtedly this is an extremely important matter, but neither a newspaper, nor a series of popular leaflets, nor a mountain of manifestoes, can serve as the basis for a militant organization in revolutionary times. We must set to work to build strong political organizations in the localities. We lack such organizations; we have been carrying on our work mainly among enlightened workers, while the masses have been engaged almost exclusively in the economic struggle. *If strong political organizations are not trained locally, what significance will even an excellently organized all-Russia newspaper have?* It will be a burning bush, burning without being consumed, but firing no one! *Iskra* thinks that around it and in the activities on its behalf people will gather and organize. *But they will find it far easier to gather and organize around activities that are more concrete* . This something more concrete must and should be the extensive organization of local newspapers, the immediate preparation of the workers’ forces for demonstrations, the constant activity of local organizations among the unemployed (indefatigable distribution of pamphlets and leaflets, convening of meetings, appeals to actions of protest against the government, etc.). We must begin live political work in the localities, and when the time comes to unite on this real basis, it will not be an artificial, paper unity; not by means of newspapers can such a unification of local work into an all-Russia cause be achieved!” (*The Eve of the Revolution* , p. 54.)

We have emphasized the passages in this eloquent tirade that most clearly show the author’s incorrect judgment of our plan, as well as the incorrectness of his point of view in general, which is here contrasted to that of *Iskra* . Unless we train strong political organizations in the localities, even an excellently organized all-Russia newspaper will be of no avail. This

is incontrovertible. But the whole point is that *there is no other way* of *training* strong political organizations except through the medium of an all-Russia newspaper. The author missed the most important statement *Iskra* made *before it proceeded* to set forth its "plan": that it was necessary "to call for the formation of a revolutionary organization, capable of uniting all forces and guiding the movement in actual practice and *not in name alone* , that is, *an organization ready at any time to support every protest and every outbreak* and use it to build up and consolidate the fighting forces suitable for the decisive struggle". But now after the February and March events, everyone will agree with this in principle, continues *Iskra* . Yet what we need is not a solution of the question in principle, but its *practical solution;* we must immediately advance a definite constructive plan through which all may immediately set to work to build *from every side* . Now we are again being dragged away from the practical solution towards something which in principle is correct, indisputable, and great, but which is entirely inadequate and incomprehensible to the broad masses of workers, namely, "to rear strong political organizations" ! This is not the point at issue, most worthy author! The point is how to go about the rearing and how to accomplish it.

It is not true to say that "we have been carrying on our work mainly among enlightened workers, while the masses have been engaged almost exclusively in the economic struggle". Presented in such a form, the thesis reduces itself to *Svoboda* 's usual but fundamentally false contraposition of the enlightened workers to the "masses". In recent years, even the enlightened workers have been "engaged almost exclusively in the economic struggle". That is the first point. On the other hand, the masses will never learn to conduct the political struggle until we help *to train* leaders for this struggle, both from among the enlightened workers and from among the intellectuals. Such leaders can acquire training *solely* by systematically evaluating *all* the everyday aspects of our political life, *all attempts* at protest and struggle on the part of the various classes and on various grounds. Therefore, to talk of "rearing political organizations" and at the same time *to contrast* the "paperwork" of a political newspaper to "live political work in the localities" is plainly ridiculous. *Iskra* has adapted its "plan" for a newspaper to the "plan" for creating a "militant preparedness" to support the unemployed movement, peasant revolts,

discontent among, the Zemstvo people, “popular indignation against some tsarist bashi-bazouk on the rampage”, etc. Anyone who is at all acquainted with the movement knows full well that the vast majority of local organizations have *never even dreamed* of these things; that many of the prospects of “live political work” here indicated *have never* been realized by a single organization; that the attempt, for example, to call attention to the growth of discontent and protest among the Zemstvo intelligentsia rouses feelings of consternation and perplexity in Nadezhdin (“Good Lord, is this newspaper intended for Zemstvo people?”—The *Eve* , p. 129), among the Economists (Letter to *Iskra* , No. 12), and among many practical workers. Under these circumstances, it is possible to “begin” *only* by inducing people *to think* about all these things, to summarize and generalize all the diverse signs of ferment and active struggle. In our time, when Social-Democratic tasks are being degraded, *the only way* “live political work” can be *begun is* with live political agitation, which is impossible unless we have an all-Russia newspaper, frequently issued and regularly distributed.

Those who regard the *Iskra* “plan” as a manifestation of “bookishness” have totally failed to understand its substance and take for the goal that which is suggested as the most suitable means for the present time. These people have not taken the trouble to study the two comparisons that were drawn to present a clear illustration of the plan. *Iskra* wrote: The publication of an all-Russia political newspaper must be *the main line* by which we may unswervingly develop, deepen, and expand the organization (viz., the revolutionary organization that is ever ready to support every protest and every outbreak). Pray tell me, when bricklayers lay bricks in, various parts of an enormous, unprecedentedly large structure, is it “paperwork” to use a line to help them find the correct place for the bricklaying; to indicate to them the ultimate goal of the common work; to enable them to use, not only every brick, but even every piece of brick which, cemented to the bricks laid before and after it, forms a finished, continuous line? And are we not now passing through precisely such a period in our Party life when we have bricks and bricklayers, but lack the guideline for all to see and follow? Let them shout that in stretching out the line, we want to command. Had we desired to command, gentlemen, we would have written on the title page, not “ *Iskra* , No. 1”, but “Rabochaya

Gazeta , No. 3", as we were invited to do by certain comrades, and *as we would have had a perfect right to do* after the events described above. But we did not do that. We wished to have our hands free to wage an irreconcilable struggle against all pseudo-Social-Democrats; we wanted our line, if properly laid, to be respected because it was correct, and not because it had been laid by an official organ.

"The question of uniting local activity in central bodies runs in a vicious circle," Nadezhdin lectures us; "unification requires homogeneity of the elements, and the homogeneity can be created only by something that unites; but the unifying element may be the product of strong local organizations which at the present time are by no means distinguished for their homogeneity." This truth is as revered and as irrefutable as that we must train strong political organizations. And it is equally barren. *Every* question "runs in a vicious circle" because political life as a whole is an endless chain consisting of an infinite number of links. The whole art of politics lies in finding and taking as firm a grip as we can of the link that is least likely to be struck from our hands, the one that is most important at the given moment, the one that most of all guarantees its possessor the possession of the whole chain. [122] If we had a crew of experienced bricklayers who had learned to work so well together that they could lay their bricks exactly as required without a guide line (which, speaking abstractly, is by no means impossible), then perhaps we might take hold of some other link. But it is unfortunate that as yet we have no experienced bricklayers trained for teamwork, that bricks are often laid where they are not needed at all, that they are not laid according to the general line, but are so scattered that the enemy can shatter the structure as if it were made of sand and not of bricks.

'Another comparison: "A newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, it is also a collective organizer. In this respect *it may be compared to the scaffolding* erected round a building under construction; it marks the contours of the structure and facilitates communication between the builders, permitting them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organized labor." [123] Does this sound anything like the attempt of an armchair author to

exaggerate his role? The scaffolding is not required at all for the dwelling; it is made of cheaper material, is put up only temporarily, and is scrapped for firewood as soon as the shell of the structure is completed. As for the building of revolutionary organizations, experience shows that sometimes they may be built without scaffolding, as the seventies showed. But at the present time we cannot even imagine the possibility of erecting the building we require without scaffolding.

Nadezhdin disagrees with this, saying: " *Iskra* thinks that around it and in the activities on its behalf people will gather and organize. *But they will find it far easier* to gather and organize around *activities that are more concrete!* " Indeed, "far easier around activities that are more concrete". A Russian proverb holds: "Don't spit into a well, you may want to drink from it." But there are people who do not object to drinking from a well that has been spat into. What despicable things our magnificent, legal "Critics of Marxism" and illegal admirers of *Rabochaya Mysl* have said in the name of this something more concrete! How restricted our movement is by our own narrowness, lack of initiative, and hesitation, which are justified with the traditional argument about finding it "far easier to gather around something more concrete"! And Nadezhdin — who regards himself as possessing a particularly keen sense of the "realities of life", who so severely condemns "armchair" authors and (with pretensions to wit) accuses *Iskra* of a weakness for seeing Economism everywhere, and who sees himself standing far above the division between the orthodox and the Critics — fails to see that with his arguments he contributes to the narrowness that arouses his indignation and that he is drinking from the most spat-in well! The sincerest indignation against narrowness, the most passionate desire to raise its worshippers from their knees, will not suffice if the indignant one is swept along without sail or rudder and, as "spontaneously" as the revolutionaries of the seventies, clutches at such things as "excitative terror", "agrarian terror", "sounding the tocsin etc. Let us take a glance at these "more concrete" activities around which he thinks it will be "far easier" to gather and organize: (1) local newspapers; (2) preparations for demonstrations; (3) work among the unemployed. It is immediately apparent that all these things have been seized upon at random as a pretext for saying something; for, however we may regard them, it would be absurd to see in them anything especially suitable for "gathering and organizing".

The selfsame Nadezhdin says a few pages further: “It is time we simply stated the fact that activity of a very pitiable kind is being carried on in the localities, the committees are not doing a tenth of what they could do ... the coordinating centers we have at present are the purest fiction, representing a sort of revolutionary bureaucracy, whose members mutually grant generalships to one another; and so it will continue until strong local organizations grow up.” These remarks, though exaggerating the position somewhat, no doubt contain many a bitter truth; but can it be said that Nadezhdin does not perceive the connection between the pitiable activity in the localities and the narrow mental outlook of the functionaries, the narrow scope of their activities, inevitable in the circumstances of the lack of training of Party workers confined to local organizations? Has he, like the author of the article on organization, published in *Svoboda* , forgotten how the transition to a broad local press (from 1898) was accompanied by a strong intensification of Economism and “primitiveness”? Even if a “broad local press” could be established at all satisfactorily (and we have shown this to be impossible, save in very, exceptional cases) — even then the local organs could not “gather and organize” *all* the revolutionary forces for a *general* attack upon the autocracy and for leadership of the *united* struggle. Let us not forget that we are here discussing *only* the “rallying”, organizing significance of the newspaper, and we could put to Nadezhdin, who defends fragmentation, the question he himself has ironically put: “Have we been left a legacy of 200,000 revolutionary organizers?” Furthermore, “preparations for demonstrations” cannot be *contrasted* to *Iskra* ’s plan, for the very reason that this plan includes the organization of the broadest possible demonstrations *as one of its aims* ; the point under discussion is the selection of the practical *means* . On this point also Nadezhdin is confused, for he has lost sight of the fact that only forces that are “gathered and organized” can “prepare for ” demonstrations (which hitherto, in the overwhelming majority of cases, have taken place spontaneously) and that we *lack* precisely *the ability* to rally and organize. “Work among the unemployed.” Again the same confusion; for this too represents one of the field operations of the mobilized forces and not a plan for mobilizing the forces. The extent to which Nadezhdin here too underestimates the harm caused by our fragmentation, by our lack of “200,000 organizers”, can be seen from the fact that: many people (including Nadezhdin) have reproached *Iskra* for the paucity of the news it

gives on unemployment and for the casual nature of the correspondence it publishes about the most common affairs of rural life. The reproach is justified; but *Iskra* is "guilty without sin". We strive "to stretch a line" through the countryside too, where there are hardly any bricklayers anywhere, and we are *obliged* to encourage *everyone* who informs us even as regards the most common facts, in the hope that this will increase the number of our contributors in the given field and will ultimately *train us all* to select facts that are really the most outstanding. But the material on which we can train is so scanty that, unless we generalize it for the whole of Russia, we shall have very little to train on at all. No doubt, one with at least as much ability as an agitator and as much knowledge of the life of the vagrant as Nadezhdin manifests could render priceless service to the movement by carrying on agitation among the unemployed; but such a person would be simply hiding his light under a bushel if he failed to inform all comrades in Russia as regards every step he took in his work, so that others, who, in the mass, still lack the ability to undertake new kinds of work, might learn from his example.

All without exception now talk of the importance of unity, of the necessity for "gathering and organizing"; but in the majority of cases what is lacking is a definite idea of where to begin and how to bring about this unity. Probably all will agree that if we "unite", say, the district circles in a given town, it will be necessary to have for this purpose common institutions, i.e., not merely the common title of "League", but genuinely common work, exchange of material, experience, and forces, distribution of functions, not only by districts, but through specialization on a town-wide scale. All will agree that a big secret apparatus will not pay its way (to use a commercial expression) "with the resources" (in both money and manpower, of course) of a single district, and that this narrow field will not provide sufficient scope for a specialist to develop his talents. But the same thing applies to the coordination of activities of a number of towns, since even a specific locality will be and, in the history of our Social-Democratic movement, has proved to be, far too narrow a field; we have demonstrated this above in detail with regard to political agitation and organizational work. What we require foremost and imperatively is to broaden the field, establish real contacts between the towns on the basis of regular, common work; for fragmentation weighs down on the people and they are "stuck in a hole" (to

use the expression employed by a correspondent to *Iskra*), not knowing what is happening in the world, from whom to learn, or how to acquire experience and satisfy their desire to engage in broad activities. I continue to insist that we can start establishing real contacts only with the aid of a common newspaper, as the only regular, all-Russia enterprise, one which will summarize the results of the most diverse forms of activity and thereby stimulate people to march forward untiringly along all the innumerable paths leading to revolution, in the same way as all roads lead to Rome. If we do not want unity in name only, we must arrange for all local study circles immediately to assign, say, a fourth of their forces to active work for the common cause, and the newspaper will immediately convey to them [124] the general design, scope, and character of the cause; it will give them a precise indication of the most keenly felt shortcomings in the all-Russia activity, where agitation is lacking and contacts are weak, and it will point out which little wheels in the vast general mechanism a given study circle might repair or replace with better ones. A study circle that has not yet begun to work, but which is only just seeking activity, could then start, not like a craftsman in an isolated little workshop unaware of the earlier development in "industry" or of the general level of production methods prevailing in industry, but as a participant in an extensive enterprise that reflects the whole general revolutionary attack on the autocracy. The more perfect the finish of each little wheel and the larger the number of detail workers engaged in the common cause, the closer will our network become and the less will be the disorder in the ranks consequent on inevitable police raids.

The mere function of distributing a newspaper would help to establish actual contacts (if it is a newspaper worthy of the name, i.e., if it is issued regularly, not once a month like a magazine, but at least four times a month). At the present time, communication between towns on revolutionary business is an extreme rarity, and, at all events, is the exception rather than the rule. If we had a newspaper, however, such communication would become the rule and would secure, not only the distribution of the newspaper, of course, but (what is more important) an exchange of experience, of material, of forces, and of resources. Organizational work would immediately acquire much greater scope, and the success of one locality would serve as a standing encouragement to

further perfection; it would arouse the desire to utilize the experience gained by comrades working in other parts of the country. Local work would become far richer and more varied than it is at present. Political and economic exposures gathered from all over Russia would provide mental food for workers of all trades and *all stages* of *development* ; they would provide material and occasion for talks and readings on the most diverse subjects, which would, in addition, be suggested by hints in the legal press, by talk among the people, and by "shamefaced" government statements. Every outbreak, every demonstration, would be weighed and, discussed in its every aspect in all parts of Russia and would thus stimulate a desire to keep up with, and even surpass, the others (we socialists do not by any means flatly reject all emulation or all "competition"!) and consciously prepare that which at first, as it were, sprang up spontaneously, a desire to take advantage of the favorable conditions in a given district or at a given moment for modifying the plan of attack, etc. At the same time, this revival of local work would obviate that desperate, "convulsive" exertion of all efforts and risking of *all* forces which every single demonstration or the publication of every single issue of a local newspaper now frequently entails. On the one hand, the police would find it much more difficult to get at the "roots", if they did not know in what district to dig down for them. On the other hand, regular common work would train our people to adjust the force of a *given* attack to the strength of the given contingent of the common army (at the present time hardly anyone ever thinks of doing that, because in nine cases out of ten these attacks occur spontaneously); such regular common work would facilitate the "transportation" from one place to another, not only of literature, but also of revolutionary forces.

In a great many cases these forces are now being bled white on restricted local work, but under the circumstances we are discussing it would be possible to transfer a capable agitator or organizer from one end of the country to the other, and the occasion for doing this would constantly arise. Beginning with short journeys on Party business at the Party's expense, the comrades would become accustomed to being maintained by the Party, to becoming professional revolutionaries, and to training themselves as real political leaders.

And if indeed we succeeded in reaching the point when all, or at least a considerable majority, of the local committees, local groups, and study circles took up active work for the common cause, we could, in the not distant future, establish a weekly newspaper for regular distribution in tens of thousands of copies throughout Russia. This newspaper would become part of an enormous pair of smith's bellows that would fan every spark of the class struggle and of popular indignation into a general conflagration. Around what is in itself still a very innocuous and very small, but regular and *common* , effort, in the full sense of the word, a regular army of tried fighters would systematically gather and receive their training. On the ladders and scaffolding of this general organizational structure there would soon develop and come to the fore Social-Democratic Zhelyabovs from among our revolutionaries and Russian Bebels from among our workers, who would take their place at the head of the mobilized army and rouse the whole people to settle accounts with the shame and the curse of Russia.

That is what we should dream of!

"We should dream!" I wrote these words and became alarmed. I imagined myself sitting at a "unity conference" and opposite me were the *Rabocheye Dyelo* editors and contributors. Comrade Martynov rises and, turning to me, says sternly: "Permit me to ask you, does an autonomous editorial board have the right to dream without first soliciting the opinion of the Party committees?" He is followed by Comrade Krichevsky; who (philosophically deepening Comrade Martynov, who long ago rendered Comrade Plekhanov more profound) continues even more sternly: "I go further. I ask, does a Marxist any right at all to dream, knowing that according to Marx, mankind always sets itself the tasks it can solve and that tactics is a process of the growth of Party tasks which grow together with the Party?"

The very thought of these stern questions sends a cold shiver down my spine and makes me wish for nothing but a place to hide in. I shall try to

hide behind the back of Pisarev.

"There are rifts and rifts," wrote Pisarev of the rift between dreams and reality. "My dream may run ahead of the natural march of events or may fly off at a tangent in a direction in which no natural march of events will ever proceed. In the first case my dream will not cause any harm; it may even support and augment the energy of the working men.... There is nothing in such dreams that would distort or paralyze labor-power. On the contrary, if man were completely deprived of the ability to dream in this way, if he could not from time to time run ahead and mentally conceive, in an entire and completed picture, the product to which his hands are only just beginning to lend shape, then I cannot at all imagine what stimulus there would be to induce man to undertake and complete extensive and strenuous work in the sphere of art, science, and practical endeavor.... The rift between dreams and reality causes no harm if only the person dreaming believes seriously in his dream, if he attentively observes life, compares his observations with his castles in the air, and if, generally speaking, he works conscientiously for the achievement of his fantasies. If there is some connection between dreams and life then all is well." [125]

Of this kind of dreaming there is unfortunately too little in our movement. And the people most responsible for this are those who boast of their sober views, their "closeness" to the "concrete", the representatives of legal criticism and of illegal "tail-ism".

C. What Type of Organization Do We Require?

From what has been said the reader will see that our "tactics, as-plan" consists in rejecting an immediate *call* for assault; in demanding "to lay effective siege to the enemy fortress"; or, in other words, in demanding that all efforts be directed towards gathering, organizing, and *mobilizing* a permanent army. When we ridiculed *Rabocheye Dyelo* for its leap from Economism to shouting for an assault (for which it clamored in *April 1901,* in *"Listok" Rabochego Dyela* , 157 No. 6) it of course came down on us

with accusations of being “doctrinaire”, of failing to understand our revolutionary duty, of calling for caution, etc. Of course, we were not in the least surprised to hear these accusations from those who totally lack principles and who evade all arguments by references to a profound “tactics-as-process”, any more than we were surprised by the fact that these charges were repeated by Nadezhdin, who in general has a supreme contempt for durable programmes and the fundamentals of tactics.

It is said that history does not repeat itself. But Nadezhdin exerts every effort to cause it to repeat itself and he zealously imitates Tkachov [126] in strongly condemning “revolutionary culturism”, in shouting about “sounding the tocsin” and about a special “ eve-of-the-revolution point of view”, etc., Apparently, he has forgotten the well-known maxim that while an original historical event represents a tragedy, its replica is merely a farce. [127] The attempt to seize power, which was prepared by the preaching of Tkachov and carried out by means of the “terrifying” terror that did really terrify, had grandeur, but the “excitative” terror of a Tkachov the Little is simply ludicrous, particularly so when it is supplemented with the idea of an organization of average people.

“If *Iskra* would only emerge from its sphere of bookishness,” wrote Nadezhdin, “it would realize that these (instances like the worker’s letter to *Iskra* , No. 7, etc.) are symptoms of the fact that soon, very soon, the ’assault’ will begin, and to speak now [sic!] of an organization linked with an all-Russia newspaper means to propagate armchair ideas and armchair activity.” What an unimaginable muddle — on the one hand, excitative terror and an “organization of average people”, along with the opinion that it is far “easier” to gather around something “more concrete”, like a local newspaper, and, on the other, the view that to talk “now” about an all-Russia organization means to propagate armchair thoughts, or, bluntly put, “now” it is already too late! But what of the “extensive organization of local newspapers” — is it not too late for that, my dear L. Nadezhdin? And compare with this *Iskra* ’s point of view and tactical line: excitative terror is nonsense; to talk of an organization of average people and of the *extensive* publication of local newspapers means to fling the door wide open to Economism. We must speak of a single all-Russia organization of

revolutionaries, and it will never be too late to talk of that until the real, not a paper, assault begins.

"Yes, as far as organization is concerned the situation is anything but brilliant," continues Nadezhdin. "Yes, *Iskra* is entirely right in saying that the mass of our fighting forces consists of volunteers and insurgents.... You do well to give such a sober picture of the state of our forces. But why, at the same time, do you forget that *the masses are not ours at all* , and consequently, will *not ask us* when to begin military operations; they will simply go and 'rebel'.... When the crowd itself breaks out with its elemental destructive force it *may* overwhelm and sweep aside the 'regular troops' among whom we prepared all the time to introduce extremely systematic organization, but never *managed* to do so." (Our italics.)

Astounding logic! *For the very reason* that the "masses are not ours" it is stupid and unseemly to shout about an immediate "assault", for assault means attack by regular troops and not a spontaneous mass upsurge. For the very reason that the masses *may* overwhelm and sweep aside the regular troops we must without fail "manage to keep up" with the spontaneous upsurge by our work of "introducing extremely systematic organization" in the regular troops, for the more we "manage" to introduce such organization the more probably will the regular troops not be overwhelmed by the masses, but will take their place at their head. Nadezhdin is confused because he imagines that troops in the course of systematic organization are engaged in something that isolates them from the masses, when in actuality they are engaged exclusively in all-sided and all-embracing political agitation, i.e., precisely in work that *brings closer and merges into a single whole* the elemental destructive force of the masses and the conscious destructive force of the organization of revolutionaries. You, gentlemen, wish to lay the blame where it does not belong. For it is precisely the *Svoboda* group that, by including terror *in its programme* , calls for an organization of terrorists, and such an organization would indeed prevent our troops from establishing closer contacts with the masses, which, unfortunately, are still not ours, and which, unfortunately, do not yet ask us, or rarely ask us, when and how to launch their military operations.

“We shall miss the revolution itself,” continues Nadezhdin in his attempt to scare *Iskra* , “in the same way as we missed ..the recent events, which came upon us like a bolt from the blue.” This sentence, taken in connection with what has been quoted above, clearly demonstrates the absurdity of the “eve-of-the revolution point of view” invented by *Svoboda* . [128] Plainly put, this special “point of view” boils down to this, that it is too late “now” to discuss and prepare. If that is the case, most worthy opponent of “bookishness”, what was the use of writing a pamphlet of 132 pages on questions of theory [129] and tactics”? Don’t you think it would have been more becoming for the “eve-of-the-revolution point of view” to have issued 132,000 leaflets containing the summary call, “Bang them — knock ’em down!”?

Those who make nation-wide political agitation the cornerstone of their programme, *their tactics, and their organizational work* , as *Iskra* does, stand the least risk of missing the revolution. The people who are now engaged throughout Russia in weaving the network of connections that spread from the all-Russia newspaper not only did not miss the spring events, but, on the contrary, gave us an opportunity to foretell them. Nor did they miss the demonstrations that were described in *Iskra* , Nos. 13 and 14; on the contrary, they took part in them, clearly realizing that it was their duty to come to the aid of the spontaneously rising masses and, at the same time, through the medium of the newspaper, help all the comrades in Russia to inform themselves of the demonstrations and to make use of their gathered experience. And if they live they *will* not miss the revolution, which, first and foremost, will demand of us experience in agitation, ability to support (in a Social-Democratic manner) every protest, as well as direct the spontaneous movement, while safeguarding it from the mistakes of friends and the traps of enemies.

We have thus come to the last reason that compels us so strongly to insist on the plan of an organization centered around an all-Russia newspaper, through the common work for the common newspaper. Only such organization will ensure the *flexibility* required of a militant Social-Democratic organization, viz., the ability to adapt itself immediately to the

most diverse and rapidly changing conditions of struggle, the ability, "on the one hand, to avoid an open battle against an overwhelming enemy, when the enemy has concentrated all his forces at one spot and yet, on the other, to take advantage of his unwieldiness and to attack him when and where he least expects it". [130] It would be a grievous error indeed to build the Party organization in anticipation only of outbreaks and street fighting, or only upon the "forward march of the drab everyday struggle". We must *always* conduct our everyday work and always be prepared for every situation, because very frequently it is almost impossible to foresee when a period of outbreak will give way to a period of calm. In the instances, however, when it is possible to do so, we could not turn this foresight to account for the purpose of reconstructing our organization; for in an autocratic country these changes take place with astonishing rapidity, being sometimes connected with a single night raid by the tsarist janizaries. [131] And the revolution itself must not by any means be regarded as a single act (as the Nadezhdins apparently imagine), but as a series of more or less powerful outbreaks rapidly alternating with periods of more or less complete calm. For that reason, the principal content of the activity of our Party organization, the focus of this activity, should be work that is both possible and essential in the period of a most powerful outbreak as well as in the period of complete calm, namely, work of political agitation, connected throughout Russia, illuminating all aspects of life, and conducted among the broadest possible strata of the masses. But this work *is unthinkable* in present-day Russia without an all-Russia newspaper, issued very frequently. The organization, which will form round this newspaper, the organization of its *collaborators* (in the broad sense of the word, i.e., all those working for it), will be ready *for everything* , from upholding the honor, the prestige, and the continuity of the Party in periods of acute revolutionary "depression" to preparing for, appointing the time for, and carrying out the *nation-wide armed uprising.*

Indeed, picture to yourselves a very ordinary occurrence in Russia-the total round-up of our comrades in one or several localities. In the absence of a *single* , common, regular activity that combines all the local organizations, such round-ups frequently result in the interruption of the work for many months. if, however, all the local organizations had one common activity, then, even in the event of a very serious round-up, two or three energetic

persons could in the course of a few weeks establish contact between the common center and new youth circles, which, as we know, spring up very quickly even now. And when the common activity, hampered by the arrests, is apparent to all, new circles will be able to come into being and make connections with the center even more rapidly.

On the other hand, picture to yourselves a popular uprising. Probably everyone will now agree that we must think of this and prepare for it. But how? Surely the Central Committee cannot appoint agents to all localities for the purpose of preparing the uprising. Even if we had a Central Committee, it could achieve absolutely nothing by such appointments under present-day Russian conditions. But a network of agents [132] that would form in the course of establishing and distributing the common newspaper would not have to "sit about and wait" for the call for an uprising, but could carry on the regular activity that would guarantee the highest probability of success in the event of an uprising. Such activity would strengthen our contacts with the broadest strata of the working masses and with all social strata that are discontented with the autocracy, which is of such importance for an uprising. Precisely such activity would serve to cultivate the ability to estimate correctly the general political situation and, consequently, the ability to select the proper moment for an uprising. Precisely such activity would train all local organizations to respond simultaneously to the same political questions, incidents, and events that agitate the whole of Russia and to react to such "incidents" in the most vigorous, uniform, and expedient manner possible; for an uprising is in essence the most vigorous, most uniform, and most expedient "answer" of the entire people to the government. Lastly, it is precisely such activity that would train all revolutionary organizations throughout Russia to maintain the most continuous, and at the same time the most secret, contacts with one another, thus creating *real* Party unity; for without such contacts it will be impossible collectively to discuss' the plan for the uprising and to take the necessary preparatory measures on the eve, measures that must be kept in the strictest secrecy.

In a word, the "plan for an all-Russia political newspaper", far from representing the fruits of the labor of armchair workers, infected with

dogmatism and bookishness (as it seemed to those who gave but little thought to it), is the most practical plan for immediate and all-round preparation of the uprising, with, at the same time, no loss of sight for a moment of the pressing day-to-day work.

Conclusion

The history of Russian Social-Democracy can be distinctly divided into three periods:

The first period embraces about ten years, approximately from 1884 to 1894. This was the period of the rise and consolidation of the theory and programme of Social-Democracy. The adherents of the new trend in Russia were very few in number. Social-Democracy existed without a working-class movement, and as a political party it was at the embryonic stage of development.

The second period embraces three or four years, 1894-98. In this period Social-Democracy appeared on the scene as a social movement, as the upsurge of the masses of the people, as a political party. This is the period of its childhood and adolescence. The intelligentsia was fired with a vast and general zeal for struggle against Narodism and for going among the workers; the workers displayed a general enthusiasm for strike action. The movement made enormous strides. The majority of the leaders were young people who had not reached “the age of thirty-five” which to Mr. N. Mikhailovsky appeared to be a sort of natural border-line. Owing to their youth, they proved to be untrained for practical work and they left the scene with astonishing rapidity. But in the majority of cases the scope of their activity was very wide. Many of them had begun their revolutionary thinking as adherents of Narodnaya Volya. Nearly all had in their early youth enthusiastically worshipped the terrorist heroes. It required a struggle to abandon the captivating impressions of those heroic traditions, and the struggle was accompanied by the breaking off of personal relations with people who were determined to remain loyal to the Narodnaya Volya and for whom the young Social-Democrats had profound respect. The struggle compelled the youthful leaders to educate themselves to read illegal literature of every trend, and to study closely the questions of legal

Narodism. Trained in this struggle, Social-Democrats went into the working-class movement without "for a moment" forgetting either the theory of Marxism, which brightly illuminated their path, or the task of overthrowing the autocracy. The formation of the Party in the spring of 1898 was the most striking and at the same time the last act of the Social-Democrats of this period.

The third period, as we have seen, was prepared in 1897 and it definitely cut off the second period in 1898 (1898-?). This was a period of disunity, dissolution, and vacillation. During adolescence a youth's voice breaks. And so, in this period, the voice of Russian Social-Democracy began to break, to strike a false note — on the one hand, in the writings of Messrs. Struve and Prokopovich, of Bulgakov and Berdyaev, and on the other, in those of V. l-n and R. M., of B. Krichevsky and Martynov. But it was only the leaders who wandered about separately and drew back; the movement itself continued to grow, and it advanced with enormous strides. The proletarian struggle spread to new strata of the workers and extended to the whole of Russia, at the same time indirectly stimulating the revival of the democratic spirit among the students and among other sections of the population. The political consciousness of the leaders, however, capitulated before the breadth and power of the spontaneous upsurge; among the Social-Democrats, another type had become dominant — the type of functionaries, trained almost exclusively on "legal Marxist" literature, which proved to be all the more inadequate the more the spontaneity of the masses demanded political consciousness on the part of the leaders. The leaders not only lagged behind in regard to theory ("freedom of criticism") and practice ("primitiveness"), but they sought to justify their backwardness by all manner of high-flown arguments. Social-Democracy was degraded to the level of trade-unionism by the Brentano adherents in legal literature, and by the tail-enders in illegal literature. The *Credo* programme began to be put into operation, especially when the "primitive methods" of the Social-Democrats caused a revival of revolutionary non-Social-Democratic tendencies.

If the reader should feel critical that I have dealt at too great length with a certain *Rabocheye Dyelo* , *I* can say only that *Rabocheye Dyelo* acquired

"historical" significance because it most notably reflected the "spirit" of this third period. [133] It was not the consistent R. M., but the weathercock Krichevskys and Martynovs who were able properly to express the disunity and vacillation, the readiness to make concessions to "criticism" to "Economism", and to terrorism. Not the lofty contempt for practical work displayed by some worshiper of the "absolute" is characteristic of this period, but the combination of pettifogging practice and utter disregard for theory. It was not so much in the direct rejection of "grandiose phrases" that the heroes of this period engaged as in their vulgarization. Scientific socialism ceased to be an integral revolutionary theory and became a hodgepodge "freely" diluted with the content of every new German textbook that appeared; the slogan "class struggle" did not impel to broader and more energetic activity but served as a balm, since "the economic struggle is inseparably linked with the political struggle"; the idea of a party did not serve as a call for the creation of a militant organization of revolutionaries, but was used to justify some sort of "revolutionary bureaucracy" and infantile playing at "democratic" forms.

When the third period will come to an end and the fourth (now heralded by many portents) will begin we do not know. We are passing from the sphere of history to the sphere of the present and, partly, of the future. But we firmly believe that the fourth period will lead to the consolidation of militant Marxism, that Russian Social-Democracy will emerge from the crisis in the full flower of manhood, that the opportunist rearguard will be "replaced" by the genuine vanguard of the most revolutionary class.

In the sense of calling for such a "replacement" and by way of summing up what has been expounded above, we may meet the question, What is to be done? with the brief reply:

Put an End to the Third Period.

Appendix: [134] The Attempt to Unite *Iskra* With *Rabocheye Dyelo*

It remains for us to describe the tactics adopted and consistently pursued by *Iskra* in its organizational relations with *Rabocheye Dyelo* . These tactics were fully expressed in *Iskra* , No. 1, in the article entitled "The Split in the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad". [135] From the outset we adopted the point of view that the *real* Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad, which at the First Congress of our Party was recognized as its representative abroad, *had split* into two organizations; that the question of the Party's representation remained an open one, having been settled only temporarily and conditionally by the election, at the International Congress in Paris, of two members to represent Russia on the International Socialist Bureau, [136] one from each of the two sections of the divided Union Abroad. We declared that fundamentally *Rabocheye Dyelo* was wrong; in principle we emphatically took the side of the Emancipation of Labour group, at the same time refusing to enter into the details of the split and noting the services rendered by the Union Abroad in the sphere of purely practical work. [137]

Consequently, ours was, to a certain extent, a waiting policy. We made a concession to the opinions prevailing among the majority of the Russian Social-Democrats that the most determined opponents of Economism could work hand in hand with the Union Abroad because it had repeatedly declared its agreement in principle with the Emancipation of Labour group, without, allegedly, taking an independent position on fundamental questions of theory and tactics. The correctness of our position was indirectly proved by the fact that almost simultaneously with the appearance of the first issue of *Iskra* (December 1900) three members separated from the Union, formed the so-called "Initiators' Group", and offered their services: (1) to the foreign section of the *Iskra* organization, (2) to the revolutionary *Sotsial-Demokrat* organization, and (3) to the Union Abroad, as mediators

in negotiations for reconciliation. The first two organizations at once announced their agreement; *the third turned down* the offer. True, when a speaker related these facts at the "Unity" Conference last year, a member of the Administrative Committee of the Union Abroad declared the rejection of the offer to have been due *entirely* to the fact that the Union Abroad was dissatisfied with the composition of the Initiators' Group. While I consider it my duty to cite this explanation, I cannot, however, refrain from observing that it is an unsatisfactory one; for, knowing that two organizations had agreed to enter into negotiations, the Union Abroad could have approached them through another intermediary or directly.

In the spring of 1901 both *Zarya* (No. 1, April) and *Iskra* (No. 4, May) [138] entered into open polemics with *Rabocheye Dyelo*. *Iskra* particularly attacked the article "A Historic Turn" in *Rabocheye Dyelo* , which, in its *April* supplement, that is, after the spring events, revealed instability on the question of terror and the calls for "blood", with which many had been carried away at the time. Notwithstanding the polemics, the Union Abroad agreed to resume negotiations for reconciliation through the instrumentality of a new group of "conciliators" A preliminary conference of representatives of the three cited organizations, held in June, framed a draft agreement on the basis of a very detailed "accord on principles", which the Union Abroad published in the pamphlet *Two Conferences* , and the League Abroad in the pamphlet *Documents of the "Unity" Conference* .

The contents of this accord on principles (more frequently named the Resolutions of the June Conference) make it perfectly clear that we put forward as an absolute condition for unity *the most emphatic* repudiation of any and every manifestation of opportunism generally, and of Russian opportunism in particular. Paragraph 1 reads: "We repudiate all attempts to introduce opportunism into the proletarian class struggle — attempts that have found expression in the so-called Economism, Bernsteinism, Millerandism, etc." "The sphere of Social-Democratic activities includes ... ideological struggle against all opponents of revolutionary Marxism" (4, c); "In every sphere of organizational and agitational activity Social-Democracy must never for a moment forget that the immediate task of the Russian proletariat is the overthrow of the autocracy" (5, a); "agitation …

not only on the basis of the everyday struggle between wage-labor and capital" (5, b); ". . . we do not recognize. . . a stage of purely economic struggle and of struggle for partial political demands" (5, c); ". . we consider it important for the movement to criticize tendencies that make a principle of the elementariness and narrowness of the lower forms of the movement" (5, d). Even a complete outsider, having read these resolutions at all attentively, will have realized from their very formulations that they are directed against people who were opportunists and Economists, who, even for a moment, forgot the task of overthrowing the autocracy, who recognized the theory of stages, who elevated narrowness to a principle, etc. Anyone who has the least acquaintance with the polemics conducted by the Emancipation of Labour group, *Zarya* ,and *Iskra* against *Rabocheye Dyelo* cannot doubt for a single moment that these resolutions repudiate, point by point, the very errors into which *Rabocheye Dyelo* strayed. Hence, when a member of the Union Abroad declared at the "Unity" Conference that the articles in No. 10 of *Rabocheye Dyelo* had been prompted, not by a new "historic turn" on the part of the Union Abroad, but by the excessive "abstractness" of the resolution, [139] the assertion was justly ridiculed by one of the speakers. Far from being abstract, he said, the resolutions were incredibly concrete: one could see at a glance that they were "trying to catch somebody".

This remark occasioned a characteristic incident at the Conference. On the one hand, Krichevsky, seizing upon the word "catch" in the belief that this was a slip of the tongue which betrayed our evil intentions ("to set a trap"), pathetically exclaimed: "Whom are they out to catch?" "Whom indeed?" rejoined Plekhanov sarcastically. "Let me come to the aid of Comrade Plekhanov's lack of perspicacity," replied Krichevsky. "Let me explain to him that the trap was set *for the Editorial Board of Rabocheye Dyelo* [general laughter] but we have not allowed ourselves to be caught!" (A remark from the left: "All the worse for you!") On the other hand, a member of the Borba group (a group of conciliators), opposing the amendments of the Union Abroad to the resolutions and desiring to defend our speaker, declared that obviously the word "catch" was dropped by chance in the heat of polemics.

For my part, I think the speaker responsible for uttering the word will hardly be pleased with this "defense". I think the words "trying to catch somebody" were "true words spoken in jest"; we have always accused *Rabocheye Dyelo* of instability and vacillation, and, naturally, we *had* to try *to catch* it in order to put a stop to the vacillation. There is not the slightest suggestion of evil intent in this, for we were discussing instability of principles And we succeeded in "catching" the Union Abroad in such comradely manner [140] that Krichevsky himself and one other member of the Administrative Committee of the Union signed the June resolutions.

The articles in *Rabocheye Dyelo* , No. 10 (our comrades saw the issue for the first time when they arrived at the Conference, a few days before the meetings started) clearly showed that a new turn had taken place in the Union Abroad in the period between the summer and the autumn: the Economists had once more gained the upper hand, and the Editorial Board, which veered with every "wind", again set out to defend "the most pronounced Berristeinians" and "freedom of criticism", to defend "spontaneity", and through the lips of Martynov to preach the "theory of restricting" the sphere of our political influence (for the alleged purpose of rendering this influence more complex). Once again Parvus' apt observation that it is difficult to catch an opportunist with a formula has been proved correct. An opportunist will readily put his name to *any* formula and as readily abandon it, because opportunism means precisely a lack of definite and firm principles. Today, the opportunists have repudiated *all* attempts to introduce opportunism, repudiated *all* narrowness, solemnly promised "never for a moment to forget about the task of overthrowing the autocracy" and to carry on "agitation not only on the basis of the everyday struggle between wage-labor and capital", etc., etc. But tomorrow they will change their form of expression and revert to their old tricks on the pretext of defending spontaneity and the forward march of the drab everyday struggle, of extolling demands promising palpable results, etc. By continuing to assert that in the articles in No. 10 "the Union Abroad did not and does not now see any heretical departure from the general principles of the draft adopted at the conference" (*Two Conferences* , p. 26), the Union Abroad merely reveals a complete lack of ability, or of desire, to understand the essential points of the disagreements.

After the tenth issue of *Rabocheye Dyelo* , we could make one effort: open a general discussion in order to ascertain whether all the members of the Union Abroad agreed with the articles and with the Editorial Board. The Union Abroad is particularly displeased with us because of this and accuses us of trying to sow discord in its ranks, of interfering in other people's business, etc. These accusations are obviously unfounded, since with an elected editorial board that "veers" with every wind, however light, everything depends upon the direction of the wind, and we defined the direction at private meetings at which no one was present, except members of the organizations intending to unite. The amendments to the June resolutions submitted in the name of the Union Abroad have removed the last shadow of hope of arriving at agreement. The amendments are documentary evidence of the new turn towards Economism and of the fact that the majority of the Union members are in agreement with *Rabocheye Dyelo* , No. 10. It was moved to delete the words "so-called Economism" from the reference to manifestations of opportunism (on the plea that "the meaning" of these words "was vague"; but if that were so, all that was required was a more precise definition of the nature of the widespread error), and to delete "Millerandism" (although Krichevsky had defended it in *Rabocheye Dyelo* , No. *2-3* , pp. 83-84, and still more openly in *Vorwarts* [141]). Notwithstanding the fact that the June resolutions definitely indicated that the task of Social-Democracy is "to guide every manifestation of the proletarian struggle against all forms of political, *economic* , and social oppression", thereby calling for the introduction of system and unity in all these manifestations of the struggle, the Union Abroad added the wholly superfluous words that "the economic struggle is a powerful stimulus to the mass movement" (taken by itself, this assertion cannot be disputed, but with the existence of narrow Economism it could not but give occasion for false interpretations). Moreover, even the direct *constriction* of "politics" was suggested for the June resolutions, both by the deletion of the words "not for a moment" (to forget the aim of overthrowing the autocracy) and by the addition of the words "the economic struggle is the most widely applicable means of drawing the masses into active political struggle". Naturally, upon the submission of such amendments, the speakers on our side refused, one after another, to take the floor, considering it hopeless to continue negotiations with people who were again turning

towards Economism and were striving to secure for themselves freedom to vacillate.

It was precisely the preservation of the independent features and the autonomy of *Rabocheye Dyelo* , considered by the Union to be the *sine qua non* of the durability of our future agreement, that *Iskra* regarded as the stumbling-block to agreement" *(Two Conferences, p. 25).* This is most inexact. We never had any designs against *Rabocheye Dyelo's* autonomy. [142] We did indeed *absolutely refuse to recognize* the independence of its features, if by "independent features" is meant independence on questions of principle in theory and tactics. The June resolutions contain an utter repudiation of *such* independence of features, because, in practice, such "independence of features" has always meant, as we have pointed out, all manner of vacillations fostering the disunity which prevails among us and which is intolerable from the Party point of view. *Rabocheye Dyelo's* articles in its tenth issue, together with its "amendments" clearly revealed its desire to preserve this kind of independence of features, and such a desire naturally and inevitably led to a rupture and a declaration of war. But all of us were ready to recognize *Rabocheye Dyelo's* "independence of features" in the sense that it should concentrate on definite literary functions. A proper distribution of these functions naturally called for: (1) a theoretical magazine, (2) a political newspaper, and (3) popular collections of articles and popular pamphlets. Only by agreeing to such a distribution of functions would *Rabocheye Dyelo* have proved that it *sincerely* desired to abandon once and for all its errors, against which the June resolutions were directed. Only such a distribution of functions would have removed all possibility of friction, effectively guaranteed a durable agreement, and, at the same time, served as a basis for a revival and for new successes of our movement.

At present not a single Russian Social-Democrat can have any doubts that the final rupture between the revolutionary and the opportunist tendencies was caused, not by any "organizational" circumstances, but by the desire of the opportunists to consolidate the independent features of opportunism and to continue to cause confusion of mind by the disquisitions of the Krichevskys and Martynovs.

Correction to *What Is To Be Done?*

The Initiators' Group of whom I speak in the pamphlet *What Is To Be Done?* have asked me to make the following correction to my description of the part they played in the attempt to reconcile the Social-Democratic organizations abroad: "Of the three members of this group, only one left the Union Abroad at the end of 1900; the others left in 1901, only after becoming convinced that it was impossible to obtain the Union's consent to a conference with the *Iskra* organization abroad and the revolutionary *Sotsial-Demokrat* organization, which the Initiators' Group had proposed. The Administrative Committee of the Union Abroad at first rejected this proposal, contending that the persons comprising the Initiators' Group were 'not competent' to act as mediators, and it expressed the desire to enter into direct contact with the *Iskra* organization abroad. Soon thereafter, however, the Administrative Committee of the Union Abroad informed the Initiators' Group that following the appearance of the first number of *Iskra* containing the report of the split in the Union, it had altered its decision and no longer desired to maintain relations with *Iskra* . After this, how can one explain the statement made by a member of the Administrative Committee of the Union Abroad that the latter's rejection of a conference was called forth *entirely* by its dissatisfaction with the composition of the Initiators' Group? It is true that it is equally difficult to explain why the Administrative Committee of the Union Abroad agreed to a conference in June of last year, still remained in force and *Iskra's* 'negative' attitude to the Union Abroad was still more strongly expressed in the first issue of *Zarya* , and in No. 4 of *Iskra* , both of which appeared prior to the June Conference."

N. Lenin

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[1] *Rabochaya Gazeta* (*Workers' Gazette*)—an illegal newspaper issued by the Kiev group of Social-Democrats. Two issues appeared—No. 1 in August and No. 2 in December (dated November)

1897. The First Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. adopted *Rabochaya Gazeta* as the official organ of the Party, but the newspaper discontinued publication shortly after the Congress, as a result of a police raid on the printing-press and the arrest of the Central Committee.

[2] Incidentally, in the history of modern socialism this is a phenomenon, perhaps unique and in its way very consoling, namely, that the strife of the various trends within the socialist movement has, from national, become international. Formerly, the disputes between Lassalleans and Eisenachers,* between Guesdists and Possibilists,** between Fabians and Social-Democrats, and between Narodnaya Volya adherents and Social-Democrats, remained confined within purely national frameworks, reflecting purely national features, and proceeding, as it were, on different planes. At the present time (as is now evident), the English Fabians, the French Ministerialists, the German Bernsteinians, and the Russian Critics – all belong to the same family, all extol each other, learn from each other, and together take up arms against "dogmatic" Marxism. In this first really international battle with socialist opportunism, international revolutionary Social-Democracy will perhaps become sufficiently strengthened to put an end to the political reaction that has long reigned in Europe? — *Lenin*

**Lassalleans and Eisenachers*— two parties in the German working-class movement in the sixties and early seventies of the nineteenth century.

Lassalleans — supporters of Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–1864) and adherents of his theories; Lassalle was a German petty-bourgeois socialist who played an active part in organizing (in 1863) the General Association of German Workers, a political organization that existed up to 1875. The programmatic demands of the Association were formulated by Lassalle in a number of articles and speeches. Lassalle regarded the state as a supra-class organization and, in conformity with that philosophically idealist view, believed that the Prussian state could be utilized to solve the social problem through the setting up of producers' cooperatives with its aid. Marx said that Lassalle advocated a "Royal-Prussian state socialism". Lassalle directed the workers towards peaceful, parliamentary forms of struggle, believing that the introduction of universal suffrage would make Prussia a "free people's state". To obtain universal suffrage he promised Bismarck the support of his Association against the liberal opposition and also in the implementation of Bismarck's plan to reunite Germany "from above" under the hegemony of Prussia. Lassalle repudiated the revolutionary class struggle, denied the importance of trade unions and of strike action, ignored the international tasks of the working class, and infected the German workers with nationalist ideas. His contemptuous attitude towards the peasantry, which he regarded as a reactionary force, did much damage to the German working-class movement. Marx and Engels fought his harmful utopian dogmatism and his reformist views. Their criticism helped free the German workers from the influence of Lassallean opportunism.

Eisenachers— members of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Germany, founded in 1869 at the Eisenach Congress. The leaders of the Eisenachers were August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, who were under the ideological influence of Marx and Engels. The Eisenach programme stated that the Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Germany considered itself "a section of the International Working Men's Association and shared its aspirations". Thanks to the regular advice and criticism of Marx and Engels, the Eisenachers pursued a more consistent revolutionary policy than did Lassalle's General Association of German Workers; in particular, on the question of German reunification, they followed "the democratic and proletarian road, struggling against the slightest concession to Prussianism, Bismarckism , and nationalism" (see present edition, Vol. 19, "August Bebel"). Under the influence of the growing working-class movement and of increased government repressions, the two parties united at the Gotha Congress in 1875 to form the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany, of which the Lassalleans formed the opportunist wing.

***Guesdists and Possibilists* — two trends in the French socialist movement arising out of the split in the French Workers' Party in 1882.

Guesdists— followers of Jules Guesde, constituted the Marxist wing of the movement and advocated an independent revolutionary policy of the proletariat. In 1901 they formed the Socialist Party of France.

Possibilists — a petty-bourgeois, reformist trend that sought to divert the proletariat from revolutionary methods of struggle. The Possibilists advocated the restriction of working-class activity to what is "possible" under capitalism. In 1902, in conjunction with other reformist groups, the Possibilists organized the French Socialist Party.

In 1905 the Socialist Party of France and the French Socialist Party united to form a single party. During the imperialist war of 1944–18, Jules Guesde, together with the entire leadership of the French Socialist Party, went over to the camp of social-chauvinism.

[3] Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* , Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* , Vol. I, Moscow, 1959, p. 245.

[4] A comparison of the two trends within the revolutionary proletariat (the revolutionary and the opportunist), and the two trends within the revolutionary bourgeoisie in the eighteenth century (the Jacobin, known as the Mountain, and the Girondist) was made in the leading article in No. 2 of *Iskra* (February 1901). The article was written by Plekhanov. The Cadets,* the Bezzaglavtsi,** and the

Mensheviks to this day love to refer to Jacobinism in Russian Social-Democracy. But how Plekhanov came to apply this concept for the first time against the Right wing of Social-Democracy – about this they prefer to keep silent or to forget. (Author's note to the 1907 edition – *Ed.*) — *Lenin*

**Cadets*— the Constitutional-Democratic Party, the principal bourgeois party in Russia, representing the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie. It was formed in October 1905. Parading as democrats and calling themselves the party of "people's freedom", the Cadets tried to win the following of the peasantry. Their aim was to preserve tsarism in the form of a constitutional monarchy. After the victory of the October Socialist Revolution, the Cadets organized counter-revolutionary conspiracies and revolts against the Soviet Republic.

***Bezzaglavtsi*— from the title of the journal *Bes Zaglaviya* (*Without a Title*)—were organizers of, and contributors to, the journal published in St. Petersburg in 1906 by S. N. Prokopovich, Y. D. Kuskova, V. Y. Bogucharsky, and others. The journal openly advocated revisionism, supported the Mensheviks and liberals, and opposed an independent proletarian policy. Lenin called the group "pro-Menshevik Cadets or pro-Cadet Mensheviks" .

[5] *Ilovaisky , D. I.* (1832–1920)—historian; author of numerous official textbooks of history that were extensively used in primary and secondary schools in pre-revolutionary Russia. In Ilovaisky's texts history was reduced mainly to acts of kings and generals; the historical process was explained through secondary and fortuitous circumstances.

[6] At the time Engels dealt his blows at Duhring, many representatives of German Social-Democracy inclined towards the latter's views, and accusations of acerbity, intolerance, uncomradely polemics, etc., were hurled at Engels even publicly at a Party Congress. At the Congress of 1877, Most, and his supporters, introduced a resolution to prohibit the publication of Engels's articles in *Vorwarts* because "they do not interest the overwhelming majority of the readers", and VahIteich declared that their publication had caused great damage to the Party, that Duhring too had rendered services to Social-Democracy: "We must utilize everyone in the interests of the Party; let the professors engage in polemics if they care to do so, but *Vorwarts* is not the place in which to conduct them" (*Vorwarts* , No. 65, June 6, 1877). Here we have another example of the defense of "freedom of criticism", and our legal critics and illegal opportunists, who love so much to cite the example of the Germans, would do well to ponder it! — *Lenin*

[7] *Katheder-Socialism* —a trend in bourgeois political economy that emerged in Germany in the seventies and eighties of the nineteenth century. Under the guise of socialism the Katheder-Socialists preached bourgeois-liberal reformism from university chairs (*Katheder*). They maintained that the bourgeois state was above classes, that it was capable of reconciling hostile classes and gradually introducing "socialism", without affecting the interests of the capitalists, while, at the same time,

taking the demands of the workers as far as possible into consideration. In Russia the views of the Katheder-Socialists were disseminated by the "legal Marxists".

[8] *Nozdryov* —a character In Gogol's *Dead Souls* whom the author called "an historical personage" for the reason that wherever he went he left behind a scandalous "history".

[9] *The Hanover* resolution—resolution on "Attacks on the Fundamental Views and Tactics of the Party", adopted by the German Social-Democratic Party Congress at Hanover, September 27–October 2 (October 9–14), 1899. A discussion of this question at the Congress and the adoption of a special resolution were necessitated by the fact that the opportunists, led by Bernstein, launched a revisionist attack on Marxist theory and demanded a reconsideration of Social-Democratic revolutionary policy and tactics. The resolution adopted by the Congress rejected the demands of the revisionists, but failed to criticize and expose Bernsteinism. Bernstein's supporters also voted for the resolution.

[10] It should be observed that *Rabocheye Dyelo* has always confined itself to a bare statement of facts concerning Bernsteinism in the German party and completely "refrained" from expressing its own opinion. See, for instance, the reports of the Stuttgart Congress* in No. 2-3 (p. 66), in which all the disagreements are reduced to "tactics" and the statement is merely made that the overwhelming majority remain true to the previous revolutionary tactics. Or, No. 4-5 (p. 25, et seq.), in which we have nothing but a paraphrasing of the speeches delivered at the Hanover Congress, with a reprint of Bebel's resolution. An exposition and a criticism of Bernstein's views are again put off (as was the case in No. 2-8) to be dealt with in a "special article". Curiously enough, in No. 4-5 (p. 33), we read the following: "...the views expounded by Bebel have the support of the vast majority of the Congress," and a few lines thereafter: " ..David defended Bernstein's views.... First of all, he tried to show that ... Bernstein and his friends, after all is said and done (sic!), stand on the basis of the class struggle..." This was written in December 1899, and in September 1901 *Rabocheye Dyelo,* apparently no longer believing that Bebel was right, repeats David's views as its own! — *Lenin*

**The Stuttgart Congress* of the German Social-Democratic Party held on September 21–26 (October 3–8), 1898, was the first congress to discuss the question of revisionism in the German Social-Democratic Party. A statement from Bernstein (who did not attend) was read to the Congress; it amplified and defended the opportunist views he had previously set forth in a number of articles. There was, however, no unity among his opponents at the Congress. Some (Bebel, Kautsky, and others) called for an ideological struggle and a criticism of Bernstein's errors, but opposed the adoption of organizational measures toward him. The others, led by Rosa Luxemburg—the minority —urged a more vigorous struggle against Bernsteinism.

[11] *Starover* (Old Believer)—the pseudonym of A. N. Potresov, a member of the *Iskra* Editorial Board; he subsequently became a Menshevik.

[12] " *The Author Who Got a Swelled Head* "—the title of one of Maxim Gorky's early stories.

[13] The reference is to an article by K. Tulin directed against Struve. (See *Collected Works* , Vol. 1, pp. 333-507. – *Ed* .) The article was based on an essay entitled "The Reflection of Marxism in Bourgeois Literature". (Author's note to the 1907 edition – *Ed.*) — *Lenin*

[14] The reference is to the collection *Material for a Characterisation of Our Economic Development* , printed legally in an edition of 2,000 copies in April 1895. The collection included Lenin's article (signed *K. Tulin*) "The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve's Book (*The Reflection of Marxism in Bourgeois Literature*)", directed against the "legal Marxists" (see present edition, Vol. 1, pp. 333–507).

[15] The reference is to the *Protest of the Seventeen against the Credo.* The present writer took part in drawing up this protest (the end of 1899).* The Protest and the *Credo* were published abroad in the spring of 1900. (See "A Protest of Russian Social-Democrats", *Collected Works* , Vol. 4, pp. 167-82 –*Ed* .) It is now known from the article written by Madame Kuskova (I think in *Byloye***) that she was the author of the *Credo* and that Mr. Prokopovich was very prominent among the Economists abroad at the time. (Author's note to the 1907 edition – *Ed* .) — *Lenin*

**"A Protest by Russian Social-Democrats"* was written by Lenin in 1899, in exile. It was a reply to the *Credo* of a group of "Economists" (S. N. Prokopovich, Y. D. Kuskova, and others, who subsequently became Cadets). On receiving a copy of the *Credo* from his sister, A. I. Yelizarova, Lenin wrote a sharp protest in which he exposed the real nature of the declaration.

The Protest was discussed and unanimously endorsed by a meeting of 17 exiled Marxists convened by Lenin in the village of Yermakovskoye, Minusinsk District (Siberia). Exiles in Turukhansk District (Siberia) and Orlovo (Vyatka Gubernia) subsequently associated themselves with the Protest.

Lenin forwarded a copy of the Protest abroad to the Emancipation of Labour group; Plekhanov published it in his *Vademecum* (*Handbook—Ed.*) *for the Editors of Rabocheye Dyelo.*

***Byloye (The Past)*— a monthly journal on historical problems published in St. Petersburg in 1906–07; in 1908 it changed its name to *Minuvshiye Cody* (*Years Past*). It was banned by the tsarist government in 1908, but resumed publication in Petrograd in July 1917 and continued in existence until 1926.

[16] *Vademecum for the Editors of Rabocheye Dyelo* —a collection of articles and documents compiled and prefaced by G. V. Plekhanov and published by the Emancipation of Labour group in Geneva in 1900; it exposed the opportunist views of the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad and of the Editorial Board of its periodical, *Rabocheye Dyelo* .

[17] Confession of faith.* — *Lenin*

**Profession de foi*— a manifesto setting forth the opportunist views of the Kiev Committee, issued at the end of 1899. It was identical with the "Economist" *Credo* on many points. Lenin criticized the document in his article "Apropos of the *Profession de foi"* (see present edition, Vol. 4, pp. 286–96).

[18] As far as our information goes, the composition of the Kiev Committee has changed since then. — *Lenin*

[19] The fact alone of the absence of public party ties and party traditions, representing as it does a cardinal difference between Russia and Germany, should have warned all sensible socialists against blind imitation. But here is an instance of the lengths to which "freedom of criticism" goes in Russia. Mr. Bulgakov, the Russian Critic, utters the following reprimand to the Austrian Critic, Hertz: "Notwithstanding the independence of his conclusions, Hertz on this point on the question of cooperative societies) apparently remains excessively bound by the opinions of his party, and although he disagrees with it in details, he dare not reject the common principle" (*Capitalism and Agriculture* , Vol. II, p. 287). The subject of a politically enslaved state, in which nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand of the population are corrupted to the marrow by political subservience and completely lack the conception of party honor and party ties, superciliously reproves a citizen of a constitutional state for being excessively "bound by the opinions of his party"! Our illegal organizations have nothing else to do, of course, but draw up resolutions on freedom of criticism.... — *Lenin*

[20] Present edition, Vol. 4, p. 354.— *Ed* .

[21] Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* , Vol. II, Moscow, 1958, p. 16.

[22] *The Gotha Programme* —the programme adopted by the German Social-Democratic Party at the Gotha Congress in 1875 when the Eisenachers and Lassalleans united. The programme suffered from eclecticism and opportunism, since the Eisenachers made concessions to the Lassalleans on the most important points and accepted their formulations. Marx and Engels subjected the Gotha Programme to scathing criticism and characterized it as a retrograde step as compared with the Eisenach Programme of 1869 (See Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme* , Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* , Vol. II, Moscow, 1958, pp. 13–48).

[23] Dritter Abdruck, Leipzig, 1875. Verlag der Genossenschaftsbuchdruckerei . (*The Peasant War in Germany* . Third impression. Cooperative Publishers, Leipzig, 1875.— *Ed* .) — *Lenin*

[24] Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* , Vol. I, Moscow, 1958, pp. 652-54.

[25] *Rabocheye Dyelo* , No. 10, September 1901, pp. 17-18. *Rabocheye Dyelo* 's italics.— *Lenin*

[26] Trade-unionism does not exclude "politics" altogether, as some imagine. Trade unions have always conducted some political (but not Social-Democratic) agitation and struggle. We shall deal with the difference between trade union politics and Social-Democratic politics in the next chapter.— *Lenin*

[27] The pamphlet *On Agitation* was written by A. Kremer (later an organizer of the Bund) and edited by Y. 0. Tsederbaum (Martov) in Vilno in 1894; it was at first circulated in handwritten and

hectographed (a method of copying) copies, but at the end of 1897 it was printed in Geneva and supplied with a preface and a concluding piece by P. B. Axelrod. The pamphlet summarized the experiences gained in Social-Democratic work in Vilno and exerted a great influence on Russian Social-Democrats, since it called on them to reject narrow study-circle propaganda and to go over to mass agitation among the workers on issues of their everyday needs and demands. It exaggerated the role of the purely economic struggle, however, to the detriment of political agitation on issues of general democratic demands, and was the embryo of the future "Economism". P. B. Axelrod noted the one-sidedness of the "Vilno Economism" in his concluding piece to the Geneva edition; G. V. Plekhanov made a critical analysis of the pamphlet *On Agitation* in his *Once More on Socialism and the Political Struggle* .

[28] A. A. Vaneyev died in Eastern Siberia in 1899 from consumption, which he contracted during solitary confinement in prison prior to his banishment. That is why we considered it possible to publish the above information, the authenticity of which we guarantee, for it comes from persons who were closely and directly acquainted with A. A. Vaneyev.— *Lenin*

[29] *Russkaya Starina* (*The Russian Antiquary*)—a monthly magazine dealing with historical problems published in St. Petersburg from 1870 to 1918.

[30] Present edition, Vol. 2, pp. 87-92.— *Ed* .

[31] *S. Peterburgsky Rabochy Listok* (*St.Petersburg Workers' Paper*)—an illegal newspaper, organ of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class. Two issues appeared: No. 1 in February 1897 (dated January and mimeographed in Russia in an edition of 300—400 copies) and No. 2 in September 1897 in Geneva.

[32] "In adopting a hostile attitude towards the activities of the Social-Democrats of the late nineties, *Iskra* ignores the absence at that time of conditions for any work other than the struggle for petty demands," declare the Economists in their "Letter to Russian Social-Democratic Organs" (*Iskra* No. 12). The facts given above show that the assertion about "absence of conditions" *is diametrically opposed to the truth.* Not only at the end, but even in the mid-nineties, all the conditions existed for other work, besides the struggle for petty demands — all the conditions except adequate training of leaders. Instead of frankly admitting that we, the ideologists, the leaders, lacked sufficient training — the Economists seek to shift the blame entirely upon the "absence of conditions", upon the effect of material environment that determines the road from which no ideologist will be able to divert the movement. What is this but slavish cringing before spontaneity, what but the infatuation of the "ideologists" with their own shortcomings?— *Lenin*

[33] *A private meeting* referred to here was held in St. Petersburg between February 14 and 17 (February 26 and March 1), 1897. It was attended by V. I. Lenin, A. A. Vaneyev, G. M. Krzhizhanovsky, and other members of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, that is, by the "veterans" who had been released from prison for three days before

being sent into exile to Siberia, as well as by the "young" leaders of the League of Struggle who had taken over the leadership of the League after Lenin's arrest in December 1895.

[34] "*Listok*" *Rabotnika* (*The Workingman's Paper*)—published in Geneva by the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad from 1896 to 1899; altogether there appeared 10 issues. Issues 1—8 were edited by the Emancipation of Labour group. But after the majority of the Union Abroad went over to "Economism", the Emancipation of Labour group refused to continue editing the paper. Nos. 9 and 10 were issued by a new editorial board set up by the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad.

[35] The "*article by V. I.*"—an article by V. P. Ivanshin.

[36] It should be stated in passing that the praise of *Rabochaya Mysl* in November 1898, when Economism had become fully defined, especially abroad, emanated from the selfsame V. I, who very soon after became one of the editors of *Rabocheye Dyelo*. And yet *Rabocheye Dyelo* denied that there were two trends in Russian Social-Democracy, and continues to deny It to this day!— *Lenin*

[37] The tsarist gendarmes wore blue uniforms.— *Tr*.

[38] That this simile is a correct one is shown by the following characteristic fact. When, after the arrest of the "Decembrists", the news spread among the workers of the Schlüsselburg Highway that the discovery and arrest were facilitated by an *agent provocateur*, N. N. Mikhailov, a dentist, who had been in contact with a group associated with the "Decembrists", the workers were so enraged that they decided to kill him.— *Lenin*

[39] These quotations are taken from the same leading article in the first number of *Rabochaya Mysl*. One can judge from this the degree of theoretical training possessed by these "V. V.s of Russian Social-Democracy",* who kept repeating the crude vulgarization of "economic materialism" at a time when the Marxists were carrying on a literary war against the real Mr. V. V., who had long ago been dubbed "a past master of reactionary deeds" for holding similar views on the relations between politics and economics!— *Lenin*

* *V. V.*—pseudonym of V. P. Vorontsov, an ideologist of liberal Narodism in the eighties and nineties of the nineteenth century. By the "*V. V.'s of Russian Social-Democracy*" Lenin understands the "Economists" who represented the opportunist trend in the Russian Social-Democratic movement.

[40] The Germans even have a special expression, *Nur-Gewerkschaftler*, which means an advocate of the "pure trade union" struggle.— *Lenin*

[41] We emphasize the word *contemporary* for the benefit of those who may pharisaically shrug their shoulders and say: It is easy enough to attack *Rabochaya Mysl* now, but is not all this ancient history? *Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur* (change the name and the tale is about you— *Ed*.) is our answer to such contemporary Pharisees, whose complete subjection to the ideas of Rabochaya Mysl will be *proved* further on. — *Lenin*

[42] Letter of the Economists, in *Iskra* , No. 12.— *Lenin*

[43] *Rabocheye Dyelo* , No. 10.— *Lenin*

[44] *Neue Zeit* , 1901-02, XX, I, No. 3, p. 79. The committee's draft to which Kautsky refers was adopted by the Vienna Congress (at the end of last year) in a slightly amended form.— *Lenin*

[45] This does not mean, of course, that the workers have no part in creating such an ideology. They take part, however, not as workers, but as socialist theoreticians, as Proudhons and Weitlings; in other words, they take part only when they are able, and to the extent that they are able, more or less, to acquire the knowledge of their age and develop that knowledge. But in order that working men *may succeed in this more often* , every effort must be made to raise the level of the consciousness of the workers in general; it is necessary that the workers do not confine themselves to the artificially restricted limits of " *literature for workers* " but that they learn to an increasing degree to master *general literature* . It would be even truer to say "are not confined", instead of "do not confine themselves", because the workers themselves wish to read and do read all that is written for the intelligentsia, and only a few (bad) intellectuals believe that it is enough "for workers" to be told a few things about factory conditions and to have repeated to them over and over again what has long been known. — *Lenin*

[46] *The Hirsch-Duncker Unions* were established in Germany in 1868 by Hirsch and Duncker, two bourgeois liberals. They preached the "harmony of class interests", drew the workers away from the revolutionary class struggle against the bourgeoisie, and restricted the role of the trade unions to that of mutual benefit societies and educational bodies.

[47] It is often said that the working class *spontaneously* gravitates towards socialism. This is perfectly true in the sense that socialist theory reveals the causes of the misery of the working class more profoundly and more correctly than any other theory, and for that reason the workers are able to assimilate it so easily, *provided* , however, this theory does not itself yield to spontaneity, *provided* it subordinates spontaneity to itself. Usually this is taken for granted, but it is precisely this which *Rabocheye Dyelo* forgets or distorts. The working class spontaneously gravitates towards socialism; nevertheless, most widespread (and continuously and diversely revived) bourgeois ideology spontaneously imposes itself upon the working class to a still greater degree. — *Lenin*

[48] *The Self-Emancipation of the Workers Group* —a small group of "Economists" formed in St. Petersburg in the autumn of 1898; it existed for only a few months and published a manifesto setting forth its aims [published in *Nakanune* (*On the Eve*) in London], a set of rules and several leaflets addressed to the workers.

[49] *Nakanune* (*On the Eve*)—a journal expressing Narodnik views. It was published in Russian in London from January 1899 to February 1902—altogether 37 issues. The journal was a rallying point for representatives of various petty-bourgeois parties.

[50] *Present Tasks and Tactics of the Russian Social-Democracy* , Geneva, 1898. Two letters to *Rabochaya Gazeta* , written in 1897.— *Lenin*

[51] Present edition, Vol. 2, pp. 323—51.— *Ed* .

[52] In defending its first untruth (“we do not know to which young comrades Axelrod referred”), *Rabocheye Dyelo* added a second, when it wrote in its *Reply* : “Since the review of *The Tasks* was published, tendencies have arisen, or become more or less clearly defined, among certain Russian Social-Democrats, towards economic one-sidedness, which represent a step backwards from the state of our movement as described in *The Tasks* ” (p. 9). This, in the *Reply* , published *in 1900* . But the first issue of *Rabocheye Dyelo* (containing the review) appeared in *April 1899* . Did Economism really arise only in 1899? No. The year 1899 saw the first protest of the *Russian* Social-Democrats against Economism (the protest against the *Credo*). Economism arose in 1897, as *Rabocheye Dyelo* very well knows, for already in *November 1898* , V. I. was praising Rabochaya Mysl (see *“Listok” Rabotnika* , No. 9-10).— *Lenin*

[53] The “stages theory”, or the theory of “timid zigzags”, in the political struggle is expressed, for example, in this article, in the following way: “Political demands, which in their character are common to the whole of Russia, should, however, at first (this was written in August 1900!) correspond to the experience gained by the given stratum (*sic* !) of workers in the economic struggle. Only [!] on the basis of this experience can and should political agitation be taken up,” etc. (p. 11). On page 4, the author, protesting against what he regards as the absolutely unfounded charge of Economist heresy, pathetically exclaims: “What Social-Democrat does not know that according to the theories of Marx and Engels the economic interests of certain classes play a decisive role in history, and, *consequently* , that particularly the proletariat’s struggle for its economic interests must be of paramount importance in its class development and struggle for emancipation?” (Our italics.) The word “consequently” is completely irrelevant. The fact that economic interests play a decisive role *does not in the least imply* that the economic (i.e., trade union) struggle is of prime importance; for the most essential, the “decisive” interests of classes can be satisfied *only by* radical *political* changes in general. In particular the fundamental economic interests of the proletariat can be satisfied only by a political revolution that will replace the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie by the dictatorship of the proletariat. Krichevsky repeats the arguments of the “V. V.’s of Russian Social-Democracy” (viz., that politics follows economics, etc.) and of the Bernsteinians of German Social-Democracy (e.g., by similar arguments Woltmann sought to prove that the workers must first of all acquire “economic power” before they can think about political revolution).— *Lenin*

[54] Present edition, Vol. 4, pp. 370—71.— *Ed* .

[55] P resent edition, Vol. 5, p. 18.— *Ed* .

[56] “ *Ein Jahr der Verwirrung* ” (“A Year of Confusion”) is the title Mehring gave to the chapter of his *History of German Social-Democracy* in which he describes the hesitancy and lack of determination displayed at first by the socialists in selecting the “tactics-as-plan” for the new situation.— *Lenin*

[57] Leading article in *Iskra* , No. 1. (See *Collected Works* , Vol. 4, p. 369 —Ed.)— *Lenin*

[58] G. V. Plekhanov published his well-known work *The Development of the Monist View of History* legally in St. Petersburg in 1895 under the pseudonym of *N. Beltov* .

[59] *Nartsis Tuporylov* (*Narcissus Blunt-Snout*) was the pseudonym under which Y. O. Martov published his satirical poem "Hymn of the Contemporary Russian Socialist" in *Zarya* , No. 1, April 1901. The "Hymn" ridiculed the "Economists" and their adaptations to spontaneous events.

[60] *Collected Works* , Vol. 5, pp. 18-20.— *Ed* .

[61] Nor must it be forgotten that in solving "theoretically" the problem of terror, the Emancipation of Labour group *generalized* the experience of the antecedent revolutionary movement.— *Lenin*

[62] To avoid misunderstanding, we must point out that here, and throughout this pamphlet, by economic struggle, we imply (in keeping with the accepted usage among us) the "practical economic struggle", which Engels, in the passage quoted above, described as "resistance to the capitalists", and which in free countries is known as the organized-labor syndical, or trade union struggle.— *Lenin*

[63] In the present chapter we deal only with the political struggle, in its broader or narrower meaning. Therefore, we note only in passing, merely as a curiosity, *Rabocheye Dyelo* 's charge that *Iskra* is "too restrained" in regard to the economic struggle (*Two Conferences* , p. 27, rehashed by Martynov in his pamphlet, *Social-Democracy and the Working Class*). If the accusers computed by the hundredweights or reams (as they are so fond of doing) any given year's discussion of the economic struggle in the industrial section of *Iskra* , in comparison with the corresponding sections of *Rabocheye Dyelo* and *Rabochaya Mysl* combined, they would easily see that the latter lag behind even in this respect. Apparently, the realization of this simple truth compels them to resort to arguments that clearly reveal their confusion. " *Iskra* ," they write, "willy-nilly [!] is compelled [!] to reckon with the imperative demands of life and to publish at least [!!] correspondence about the working-class movement" (*Two Conferences* , p. 27). Now this is really a crushing argument!— *Lenin*

[64] We say "in general", because *Rabocheye Dyelo* speaks of general principles and of the general tasks of the Party as a whole. Undoubtedly, cases occur in practice when politics really *must* follow economics, but only Economists can speak of this in a resolution intended to apply to the whole of Russia. Cases do occur when *it is possible* "right from the beginning" to carry on political agitation "exclusively on an economic basis"; yet *Rabocheye Dyelo* came in the end to the conclusion that "there is no need for this whatsoever" (*Two Conferences* , p. 11). In the following chapter, we shall show that the tactics of the "politicians" and revolutionaries not only do not ignore the trade union tasks of Social-Democracy, but that, on the contrary, they alone *can secure* their consistent fulfilment.— *Lenin*

[65] These are the precise expressions used in *Two Conferences* , pp. 31, 32, 28 and 80.— *Lenin*

[66] *Two Conferences* , p. 32.— *Lenin*

[67] *Rabocheye Dyelo* , No. 10, p. 60. This is the Martynov variation of the application, which we have characterized above, of the thesis "every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes" to the present chaotic state of our movement. In fact, this is merely a translation into Russian of the notorious Bernsteinian sentence: "The movement is everything, the final aim is nothing."— *Lenin*

[68] P. 43. "Of course, when we advise the workers to present certain economic demands to the government, we do so because in the *economic* sphere the autocratic government is, of necessity, prepared to make certain concessions!"— *Lenin*

[69] *Collected Works* , Vol 5, pp. 253—74.— *Ed* .

[70] *Rabochaya Mysl, "Separate Supplement"* , p. 14.— *Lenin*

[71] *Collected Works* , Vol. 4, pp. 414-19— *Ed.*

[72] The demand "to lend the economic struggle itself a political character" most strikingly expresses *subservience to spontaneity* in the sphere of political activity. Very often the economic struggle *spontaneously* assumes a political character, that is to say, without the intervention of the "revolutionary bacilli — the intelligentsia", without the intervention of the class-conscious Social-Democrats. The economic struggle of the English workers, for instance, also assumed a political character without any intervention on the part of the socialists. The task of the Social-Democrats, however, is not exhausted by political agitation on an economic basis; their task is *to convert* trade-unionist politics into Social-Democratic political struggle, *to utilize* the sparks of political consciousness which the economic struggle generates among the workers, for the purpose of *raising* the workers to the level of *Social-Democratic* political consciousness. The Martynovs, however, instead of raising and stimulating the spontaneously awakening political consciousness of the workers, *bow to spontaneity* and repeat over and over *ad nauseam* , that the economic struggle "Impels" the workers to realize their own lack of political rights. It is unfortunate, gentlemen, that the spontaneously awakening trade-unionist political consciousness does not " *impel* " you to an understanding of your Social-Democratic tasks.— *Lenin*

[73] To prove that this imaginary speech of a worker to an Economist is based on fact, we shall refer to two witnesses who undoubtedly have direct knowledge of the working-class movement and who are least of all inclined to be partial towards us "doctrinaires"; for one witness is an Economist (who regards even *Rabocheye Dyelo* as a political organ!), and the other is a terrorist. The first witness is the author of a remarkably truthful and vivid article entitled "The St. Petersburg Working-Class Movement and the Practical Tasks of Social-Democracy", published in *Rabocheye Dyelo* No. 6. He divides the workers into the following categories: (1) class-conscious revolutionaries; (2) intermediate stratum; (3) the remaining masses. The intermediate stratum, he says, "is often more interested in questions of political life than in its own immediate economic interests, the connection between which and the general social conditions it has long understood" ... *Rabochaya Mysl* "is sharply criticized": "It keeps on repeating the same thing over and over again, things we have long

known, read long ago." "Again nothing in the political review!" (pp. 30-31). But even the third stratum, "the younger and more sensitive section of the workers, less corrupted by the tavern and the church, who hardly ever have the opportunity of getting hold of political literature, discuss political events in a rambling way and ponder over the fragmentary news they get about student riots", etc. The terrorist writes as follows: They read over once or twice the petty details of factory life in other towns, not their own, and then they read no more ... dull, they find it.... To say nothing in a workers' paper about the government ... is to regard the workers as being little children.... The workers are not little children" (*Svoboda* , published by the Revolutionary-Socialist Group,. pp. 69-70).— *Lenin*

[74] Martynov "conceives of another, more realistic [?] dilemma" (*Social-Democracy and the Working Class,* p. 19): "Either Social-Democracy takes over the direct leadership of the economic struggle of the proletariat and by that [!] transforms it into a revolutionary class struggle...." "By that", i.e., apparently by the direct leadership of the economic struggle. Can Martynov cite an instance in which leading the trade-union struggle alone has succeeded in transforming a trade-unionist movement into a revolutionary class movement? Can he not understand that in order to bring about this "transformation" we must actively take up the "direct leadership" of all-sided political agitation?... "Or the other perspective: Social-Democracy refrains from assuming the leadership of the economic struggle of the workers and so ... clips its own wings ... " In *Rabocheye Dyelo* 's opinion, quoted above, it is *Iskra* that "refrains". We have seen, however, that the latter *does far more than Rabocheye Dyelo* to lead the economic struggle, but that, moreover, it does not confine itself thereto and *does not narrow down* its political tasks for its sake.— *Lenin*

[75] The big street demonstrations which began in the spring of 1901. (Author's note to the 1907 edition.— *Ed* .)— *Lenin*

[76] For example, during the Franco-Prussian War, Liebknecht dictated a programme of action *for the whole of democracy;* to an even greater extent Marx and Engels did this in 1848.— *Lenin*

[77] *Collected Works* , Vol. 5, pp. 21-22 —*Ed* .

[78] The letter in *Iskra* , No. 7 (August 1901), was from a weaver. It was published in the section "Workers' Movement and Letters from the Factories". The letter testified to the great influence of Lenin's *Iskra* among the advanced workers.

The letter reads in part:

"...I showed *Iskra* to many fellow-workers and the copy was read to tatters; but we treasure it.... *Iskra* writes about our cause, about the All-Russian cause which cannot be evaluated in kopeks or measured in hours; when you read the paper you understand why the gendarmes and the police are afraid of us workers and of the intellectuals whom we follow. It is a fact that they are a threat, not only to the bosses' pockets, but to the tsar, the employers, and all the rest.... It will not take much now to set the working people aflame. All that is wanted is a spark, and the fire will break out. How

true are the words ‘The Spark will kindle a flame!’ (The motto of *Iskra* .— *Ed.*) In the past every strike was an important event, but today everyone sees that strikes alone are not enough and that we must now fight for freedom, and gain it through struggle. Today everyone, old and young, is eager to read but the sad thing is that there are no books. Last Sunday I gathered eleven people and read to them ‘Where To Begin’. We discussed it until late in the evening. How well it expressed everything, how it gets to the very heart of things.... And we would like to write a letter to your *Iskra* and ask you to teach us, not only how to begin, but how to live and how to die.”

[79] Lack of space has prevented us from replying in detail, in *Iskra* , to this letter, which is highly characteristic of the Economists. We were very glad at its appearance, for the allegations that *Iskra* did not maintain a consistent class point of view had reached us long before that from various sources, and we were waiting for an appropriate occasion, or for a formulated expression of this fashionable charge, to give our reply. Moreover, it is our habit to reply to attacks, not by defense, but by counter-attack.— *Lenin*

[80] In the interval between these articles there was one (*Iskra* , No. 3), which dealt especially with class antagonisms in the countryside. (See *Collected Works* , Vol. 4, pp. 420-28 —*Ed* .)— *Lenin*

[81] *Collected Works* , Vol. 4, pp. 414-19 —*Ed* .

[82] *Ibid* ., pp. 420-28 —*Ed* .

[83] *Ibid* ., Vol. 5, pp. 95-100 —*Ed* .

[84] *Ibid.* , pp. 101-02 —*Ed* .

[85] *Rossiya* (*Russia*)—a moderate liberal newspaper published in St. Petersburg from 1899 to 1902.

[86] *Collected Works* , Vol. 5, pp. 87-88 —*Ed* .

[87] There follows a reference to the “concrete Russian conditions which fatalistically impel the working-class movement on to the revolutionary path”. But these people refuse to understand that the revolutionary path of the working-class movement might not be a Social-Democratic path. When absolutism reigned, the entire West-European bourgeoisie “impelled”, deliberately impelled, the workers onto the path of revolution. We Social-Democrats, however, cannot be satisfied with that. And if we, by any means whatever, degrade Social-Democratic politics to the level of spontaneous trade-unionist politics, we thereby play into the hands of bourgeois democracy.— *Lenin*

[88] *S. Peterburgskiye Vedomosti* (*St. Petersburg Recorder*)—a newspaper that began publication in St. Petersburg in 1728 as a continuation of the first Russian newspaper *Vedomosti* , founded in 1703. From 1728 to 1874 the *S. Peterburgskiye Vedomosti* was published by the Academy of Sciences and from 1875 onwards by the Ministry of Education; it continued publication until the end of 1917.

[89] *L. Brentano* —a German bourgeois economist, a champion of so-called "state socialism", who tried to prove the possibility of achieving social equality within the framework of capitalism by reforms and through the reconciliation of the interests of the capitalists and of the workers. Using Marxist phraseology as a cover, Brentano and his followers tried to subordinate the working-class movement to the interests of the bourgeoisie.

[90] The full name of this small organization was *Workers' Group for the Struggle Against Capital* ; its views were close to those of the "Economists". The group was formed in St. Petersburg in the spring of 1899; it prepared a mimeographed leaflet, "Our Programme", which was never circulated, owing to the arrest of the group.

[91] *Rabochaya Mysl* and *Rabocheye Dyelo* , especially the *Reply* to Plekhanov.— *Lenin*

[92] "Who Will Bring About the Political Revolution?" in the collection published in Russia, entitled *The Proletarian Struggle.* Re-issued by the Kiev Committee.— *Lenin*

[93] *Regeneration of Revolutionism* and the journal *Svoboda* .— *Lenin*

[94] *Collected Works* , Vol. 5, p. 18 —*Ed* .

[95] *N. N.* —pseudonym of S. N. Prokopovich, an active "Economist" who later became a Cadet.

[96] German "loose".— *Ed* .

[97] *Vasilyev, N. V.* —Colonel of the Gendarmes, supporter of the Zubatov "police socialism".

Ozerov, I. Kh. and Worms, A. E. —professors at Moscow University, spokesmen for the "police socialism" of Zubatov.

[98] *Afanasy Ivanovich and Pulkheria Ivanovna* —a patriarchal family of petty provincial landlords in Gogol's *Old-Time Landowners* .

[99] *Iskra* 's campaign against the tares evoked the following angry outburst from *Rabocheye Dyelo* : "For *Iskra* , the signs of the times lie not so much in great events [of the spring], as in the miserable attempts of the agents of Zubatov to 'legalize' the working-class movement. It fails to see that these facts tell against it; for they testify that the working-class movement has assumed menacing proportions in the eyes of the government" (*Two Conferences* , p. 27). For all this we have to blame the "dogmatism" of the orthodox who "turn a deaf ear to the imperative demands of life". They obstinately refuse to see the yard-high wheat and are combating inch-high tares! Does this not reveal a "distorted sense of perspective in regard to the Russian working-class movement" (*ibid* ., p. 27)? — *Lenin*

[100] Of wages earned.— *Tr* .

[101] For the moment let us observe merely that our remarks on "pushing on from outside" and *Svoboda's* other disquisitions on organization apply in *their entirety to all* the Economists, including the adherents of *Rabocheye Dyelo* ; for some of them have actively preached and defended such views on organization, while others among them have drifted into them.— *Lenin*

[102] This term is perhaps more applicable to *Svoboda* than the former, for in an article entitled "The Regeneration of Revolutionisin" the publication defends terrorism, while in the article at present under review it defends Economism. One might say of *Svoboda* that "it would if it could, but it can't". Its wishes and intentions are of the very best — but the result is utter confusion; this is chiefly due to the fact that, while *Svoboda* advocates continuity of organization, it refuses to recognize continuity of revolutionary thought and Social-Democratic theory. It wants to revive the professional revolutionary ("The Regeneration of Revolutionism"), and to that end proposes, first, excitative terrorism, and, secondly, — an organization of average workers" (*Svoboda* , No. 1, p. 66, et seq.), as less likely to be "pushed on from outside". In other words, it proposes to pull the house down to use the timber for heating it.— *Lenin*

[103] Lenin refers here to his own revolutionary activity in St. Petersburg in 1893-95.

[104] Thus, an undoubted revival of the democratic spirit has recently been observed among persons in military service, partly as a consequence of the more frequent street battles with "enemies" like workers and students. As soon as our available forces permit, we must without fail devote the most serious attention to propaganda and agitation among soldiers and officers, and to the creation of "military organizations" affiliated to our Party.— *Lenin*

[105] I recall that once a comrade told me of a factory inspector who wanted to help the Social-Democrats, and actually did, but complained bitterly that he did not know whether his "information" reached the proper revolutionary center, how much his help was really required, and what possibilities there were for utilizing his small and petty services. Every practical worker can, of course, cite many similar instances in which our primitiveness deprived us of allies. These services, each "small" in itself, but invaluable when taken in the mass, could and would be rendered to us by office employees and officials, not only in factories, but in the postal service, on the railways, in the Customs, among the nobility, among the clergy, and in *every* other walk of life, including even the police and the Court! Had we a real party, a real militant organization of revolutionaries, we would not make undue demands on every one of these "aides", we would not hasten always and invariably to bring them right into the very heart of our "illegality", but, on the contrary, we would husband them most carefully and would even train people especially for such functions, bearing in mind that many students could be of much greater service to the Party as "aides" holding some official post than as "short-term" revolutionaries. But, I repeat, only an organization that is firmly established and has no lack of active forces would have the right to apply such tactics.— *Lenin*

[106] *Svoboda* , No. 1, p. 66, in the article " Organisation ": "The heavy tread of the army of workers will reinforce all the demands that will be advanced on behalf of Russian Labour " — Labour with a capital L, of course. And the author exclaims: "I am not in the least hostile towards the intelligentsia, but [but — the word that Shchedrin translated as meaning: The ears never grow higher than the forehead!] — but I always get frightfully annoyed when a man comes to me uttering

beautiful and charming words and demands that they be accepted for their [his?] beauty and other virtues" (p. 62). Yes, I always get "frightfully annoyed", too.— *Lenin*

[107] Cf . *The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats, p. 21,* polemics against P. L. Lavrov. (See *Collected Works,* Vol. 2, pp. 340-41. —Ed.)— *Lenin*

[108] *The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats, p. 23.* (See *Collected Works, Vol. 2, p. 342. — Ed.)* Apropos, we shall give another illustration *of* the fact that *Rabocheye Dyelo* either does not understand what it is talking about or changes its views "with the wind". In No. 1 of *Rabocheye Dyelo* , we find the following passage in italics: " *The substance set forth in the pamphlet accords entirely with the editorial programme of 'Rabocheye Dyelo'" (p. 142).* Really? Does the view that the overthrow of the autocracy must not be set as the first task *of* the mass movement accord with the views expressed in *The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats?* Do the theory of "the economic struggle against the employers and the government" and the stages theory accord with the views expressed in that pamphlet? We leave it to the reader to judge whether a periodical that understands the meaning of "accordance in opinion" in this peculiar manner can have firm principles.— *Lenin*

[109] *Report to the Paris Congress* ,* p. 14. From that time (1897) to the spring of 1900, thirty issues of various papers were published in various places.... On an average, over one issue per month was published".— *Lenin*

*The reference is to the pamphlet *Report on the Russian Social-Democratic Movement to International Socialist Congress in Paris* , 1900. The Report was submitted to the Congress by the Editorial Board of *Rabocheye Dyelo* on behalf of the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad and was published as a separate pamphlet in Geneva in 1901; the pamphlet also contained the report of the Bund ("The History of the Jewish Working-Class Movement in Russia and Poland").

[110] This difficulty is more apparent than real. In fact, *there is not* a single local study circle that lacks the opportunity of taking up some function or other in connection with all-Russia work. "Don't say, I can't; say, I won't."— *Lenin*

[111] That is why even examples of exceptionally good local newspapers fully confirm our point of view. For example, *Yuzhny Rabochy** is an excellent newspaper, entirely free of instability of principle. But it has been unable to provide what it desired for the local movement, owing to the infrequency of its publication and to extensive police raids. Principled presentation of the fundamental questions of the movement and wide political agitation, which our Party most urgently requires at the present time, has proved too big a job for the local newspaper. The material of particular value it has published, like the articles on the mine owners' convention and on unemployment, was not strictly local material, *it was required for the whole of Russia* , not for the South alone. No such articles have appeared in any of our Social-Democratic newspapers.— *Lenin*

* *Yuzhny Rabochy* (*The Southern Worker*)—a Social-Democratic newspaper, illegally published from January 1900 to April 1903 by a group of that name; twelve issues appeared.

[112] Legal material is particularly important in this connection, and we are particularly behind in our ability to gather and utilize it systematically. It would not be an exaggeration to say that one could somehow compile a trade union pamphlet on the basis solely of legal material, but it could not be done on the basis of illegal material alone. In gathering illegal material from Workers oil questions like those dealt with in the publications of *Rabochaya Mysl* , we waste a great deal of the efforts of revolutionaries (whose place in this work could very easily be taken by legal workers), and yet we never obtain good material. The reason is that a worker who very often knows only a single department of a large factory and almost always the economic results, but not the general conditions and standards of his work, cannot acquire the knowledge which is possessed by the office staff of a factory, by inspectors, doctors, etc., and which is scattered in petty newspaper reports and in special industrial, medical, Zemstvo, and other publications.

I vividly recall my "first experiment", which I would never like to repeat. I spent many weeks "examining" a worker, who would often visit me, regarding every aspect of the conditions prevailing in the enormous factory at which he was employed. True, after great effort, I managed to obtain material for a description (of the one single factory!), but at the end of the interview the worker would wipe the sweat from his brow, and say to me smilingly: 'I find it easier to work overtime than to answer your questions."

The more energetically we carry on our revolutionary struggle, the more the government will be compelled to legalize part of the "trade union" work, thereby relieving us of part of our burden.— *Lenin*

[113] *Collected Works* , Vol. 5, pp. 13-24 —*Ed.*

[114] *Iskra* , No. 8.The reply of the Central Committee of the General Jewish Union of Russia and Poland to our article on the national question.— *Lenin*

[115] We deliberately refrain from relating these facts* in the sequence of their occurrence.— *Lenin*

*Lenin added this footnote for purposes of secrecy. The facts are enumerated in the order in which they actually took place.

[116] *Collected Works,* Vol. 2, pp. 323-51 and 267-315 —*Ed.*

[117] The reference is to the negotiations between the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class and Lenin who, in the second half of 1897, wrote the two pamphlets mentioned.

[118] The author requests me to state that, like his previous pamphlets, this one was sent to the Union Abroad on the assumption that its publications were edited by the Emancipation of Labour

group (owing to certain circumstances, he could not then — February 1899 — know of the change in editorship). The pamphlet will be republished by the League* at an early date.— *Lenin*

*The reference is to the League of Russian Revolutionary Social-Democracy Abroad.

[119] The reference is to the negotiations between Lenin and the Central Committee of the Bund.

[120] *Collected Works,* Vol. 4, pp. 210-14, 215-20, 221-26 —*Ed* .

[121] The " *fourth fact* " of which Lenin speaks was the attempt of the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad and the Bund to convene the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. in the spring of 1900. The " *member of the committee* " referred to was I. H. Lalayants (a member of the Ekaterinoslav Social-Democratic Committee) who came to Moscow in February 1900 for talks with Lenin.

[122] Comrade Krichevsky and Comrade Martynov! I call your attention to this outrageous manifestation of "autocracy", "uncontrolled authority", "supreme regulating", etc. just think of it: a desire to *possess* the whole chain!! Send in a complaint at once. Here you have a ready-made topic for two leading articles for No. 12 of *Rabocheye Dyelo! — Lenin*

[123] Martynov, in quoting the first sentence of this passage in *Rabocheye Dyelo* (No. 10, p. 62), omitted the second, as if desiring to emphasize either his unwillingness to discuss the essentials of the question or his inability to understand them.— *Lenin*

[124] *A reservation* : that is, if a given study circle sympathizes with the policy of the newspaper and considers it useful to become a collaborator, meaning by that, not only for literary collaboration, but for revolutionary collaboration generally. *Note for Rabocheye Dyelo* : Among revolutionaries who attach value to the cause and not to playing at democracy, who do not separate "sympathy" from the most active and lively participation, this reservation is taken for granted.— *Lenin*

[125] Lenin cites the article by D. I. Pisarev "Blunders of Immature Thinking".

[126] *Tkachov, P. N.* (1844-1885)—one of the ideologists of revolutionary Narodism, a follower of the Auguste Blanqui.

[127] Lenin refers to the following passage from Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* : "Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce" (see Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* , Vol. 1, Moscow, 1958, p. 247).

[128] *The Eve of the Revolution, p. 62. — Lenin*

[129] In his *Review of Questions of Theory* , Nadezhdin, by the way, made almost no contribution whatever to the discussion of questions of theory, apart, perhaps, from the following passage, a most peculiar one from the "eve-of-the-revolution point of view": "Bernsteinism, on the whole, is losing its acuteness for us at the present moment, as is the question whether Mr. Adamovich will prove that Mr. Struve has already earned a lacing, or, on the contrary, whether Mr. Struve will refute Mr. Adamovich and will refuse to resign — it really makes no difference, because the hour of revolution

has struck" (p. 110). One can hardly imagine a more glaring illustration of Nadezhdin's infinite disregard for theory. We have proclaimed "the eve of the revolution", *therefore* "it really makes no difference" whether or not the orthodox will succeed in finally driving the Critics from their positions! Our wiseacre fails to see that it is precisely during the revolution that we shall stand in need of the results of our theoretical battles with the Critics in order to be able resolutely to combat their *practical* positions!— *Lenin*

[130] *Iskra*, No. 4, "Where To Begin". "Revolutionary culturists, who do not accept the eve-of-the-revolution point of view, are not in the least perturbed by the prospect of working for a long period of time," writes Nadezhdin (p. 62). This brings us to observe: Unless we are able to devize political tactics and an organizational plan for *work over a very long period*, while ensuring, in *the very process of this work*, our Party's readiness to be at its post and fulfill its duty in every contingency whenever the march of events is accelerated — unless we succeed in doing this, we shall prove to he but miserable political adventurers. Only Nadezhdin, who began but yesterday to describe himself as a Social-Democrat, can forget that the aim of Social-Democracy is to transform radically the conditions of life of the whole of mankind and that for this reason it is not permissible for a Social-Democrat to be "perturbed" by the question of the duration of the work.— *Lenin*

[131] *Janizaries* —privileged Turkish infantry, abolished in 1826. The janizaries plundered the population and were known for their unusual brutality. Lenin called the tsarist police "janizaries".

[132] Alas, alas! Again I have let slip that awful word "agents", which jars so much on the democratic cars of the Martynovs! I wonder why this word did not offend the heroes of the seventies and yet off ends the amateurs of the nineties? I like the word, because it clearly and trenchantly indicates *the common cause* to which all the agents bend their thoughts and actions, and if I had to replace this word by another, the only word I might select would be the word "collaborator", if it did not suggest a certain bookishness and vagueness. The thing we need is a military organization of agents. However, the numerous Martynovs (particularly abroad), whose favorite pastime is "mutual grants of generalships to one another", may instead of saying "passport agent" prefer to say, "Chief of the Special Department for Supplying Revolutionaries with Passports". etc.— *Lenin*

[133] I could also reply with the German proverb: *Den Sack schlägt man, den Esel meint man* (you beat the sack, but you mean the donkey). Not *Rabocheye Dyelo* alone, but also *the broad mass of* practical workers *and theoreticians* was carried away by the "criticism" *a la mode*, becoming confused in regard to the question of spontaneity and lapsing from the Social-Democratic to the trade-unionist conception of our political and organizational tasks. — *Lenin*

[134] Lenin omitted this appendix when *What Is To Be Done?* was republished in the collection *Twelve Years* in 1907. p. 521

[135] *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 378-79 *–Ed.* — *Lenin*

[136] *The International Socialist Bureau* —the executive body of the Second International established by decision of the Paris Congress in 1900. From 1905 onwards Lenin was a member of

the Bureau as a representative of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.

[137] Our judgment of the split was based, not only upon a study of the literature on the subject, but also on information gathered abroad by several members of our organization. — *Lenin*

[138] *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 13-24 –*Ed*. — *Lenin*

[139] This assertion is repeated in *Two Conferences*, p. 25. — *Lenin*

[140] Precisely: In the introduction to the June resolutions we said that Russian Social-Democracy as a whole always stood by the principles of the Emancipation of Labour group and that the particular service of the Union Abroad was its publishing and organizing activity. In other words, we expressed our complete readiness to forget the past and to recognize the usefulness (for the cause) of the work of our comrades of the Union Abroad *provided* it completely ceased the vacillation we tried to "catch". Any impartial person reading the June resolutions will only thus interpret them. If the Union Abroad, after having *caused* a split by its new turn towards Economism (in its articles in No. 10 and in the amendments), now solemnly charges us with untruth (*Two Conferences*, p. 30), because of what we said about its services, then, of course, such an accusation can only evoke a smile. — *Lenin*

[141] A polemic on the subject started in Vorwarts between its present editor, Kautsky, and the Editorial Board of *Zarya*. We shall not fail to acquaint the Russian reader with this controversy.* — *Lenin*

* *Iskra*, No. 18 (March 10, 1902) published in the section "From the Party" An item entitled "*Zarya's* Polemic with *Vorwarts*", summing up the controversy.

[142] That is, if the editorial consultations in connection with the establishment of a joint supreme council of the combined organizations are not to be regarded as a restriction of autonomy. But in June *Rabocheye Dyelo* agreed to this. — *Lenin*

Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership

by Mao Zedong, 1943

1. There are two methods which we Communists must employ in whatever work we do. One is to combine the general with the particular; the other is to combine the leadership with the masses.

2. In any task, if no general and widespread call is issued, the broad masses cannot be mobilized for action. But if persons in leading positions confine themselves to a general call—if they do not personally, in some of the organizations, go deeply and concretely into the work called for, make a break-through at some single point, gain experience and use this experience for guiding other units—then they will have no way of testing the correctness or of enriching the content of their general call, and there is the danger that nothing may come of it. In the rectification movement of 1942, for example, there were achievements wherever the method of combining the general call with particular and specific guidance was used, but there were no achievements wherever this method was not used. In the rectification movement of 1943, each bureau and sub-bureau of the Central Committee and each area and prefectural Party committee, in addition to making a general call (a rectification plan for the whole year), must do the following things, gaining experience in the process. Select two or three units (but not too many) from the organization itself and from other organizations, schools or army units in the vicinity. Make a thorough study of those units, acquire a detailed knowledge of the development of the rectification movement in them and a detailed knowledge of the political history, the ideological characteristics, the zeal in study and the strong and weak points in the work of some (again not too many) representative members of their personnel. Furthermore, give personal guidance to those in charge to find concrete solutions for the practical problems facing those units. The leaders in every organization, school or army unit must do likewise, as each of these has a number of subordinate units. Moreover, this

is the method by which the leaders combine leading and learning. No one in a leading position is competent to give general guidance to all the units unless he derives concrete experience from particular individuals and events in particular subordinate units. This method must be promoted everywhere so that leading cadres at all levels learn to apply it.

Experience in the 1942 rectification movement also proves it is essential for the success of the rectification that a leading group should be formed in each unit in the course of the movement, made up of a small number of activists and with the heads of the given unit as its nucleus, and that this leading group should link itself closely with the masses taking part in the movement. However active the leading group may be, its activity will amount to fruitless effort by a handful of people unless combined with the activity of the masses. On the other hand, if the masses alone are active without a strong leading group to organize their activity properly, such activity cannot be sustained for long, or carried forward in the right direction, or raised to a high level.

The masses in any given place are generally composed of three parts, the advanced, the intermediate and the backwards. The leaders must therefore be skilled in uniting the small number of advanced elements around the leadership and must rely on them to raise the level of the intermediate element and to win over the backward elements. A leading group that is genuinely united and linked with the masses can be formed only gradually in the process of mass struggle, and not in isolation from it. In the process of a great struggle, the composition of the leading group in most cases should not and cannot remain entirely unchanged throughout the initial, middle and final stages; the activists who come forward in the course of the struggle must constantly be promoted to replace those original members of the leading group who are inferior by comparison or who have degenerated. One fundamental reason why the work in many places and many organizations cannot be pushed ahead is the lack of a leading group which is united, linked with the masses and kept constantly healthy.

A school of a hundred people certainly cannot be run well if it does not have a leading group of several people; or a dozen or more, which is formed in accordance with the actual circumstances (and not thrown together artificially) and is composed of the most active, upright and alert of the

teachers, the other staff and the students. In every organization, school, army unit, factory or village, whether large or small, we should give effect to the ninth of Stalin's twelve conditions for the bolshevization of the Party, namely, that on the establishment of a nucleus of leadership. [1] The criteria for such a leading group should be the four which Dimitrov enumerated in his discussion of cadres policy—absolute devotion to the cause, contact with the masses, ability independently to find one's bearings and observance of discipline. [2] Whether in carrying out the central tasks—war, production, education (including rectification)—or in checking-up on work, examining the cadres' histories, or in other activities, it is necessary to adopt the method of linking the leading group with the masses, in addition to that of linking the general call with particular guidance.

4. In all the practical work of our Party, all correct leadership is necessarily "from the masses, to the masses". This means: take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action. Then once again concentrate ideas from the masses and once again go to the masses so that the ideas are persevered in and carried through. And so on, over and over again in an endless spiral, with the ideas becoming more correct, more vital and richer each time. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge.

5. The concept of a correct relationship between the leading group and the masses in an organization or in a struggle, the concept that correct ideas on the part of the leadership can only be "from the masses, to the masses", and the concept that the general call must be combined with particular guidance when the leadership's ideas are being put into practice—these concepts must be propagated everywhere during the present rectification movement in order to correct the mistaken viewpoints among our cadres on these questions. Many comrades do not see the importance of, or are not good at, drawing together the activists to form a nucleus of leadership, and they do not see the importance of, or are not good at, linking this nucleus of leadership closely with the masses, and so their leadership becomes bureaucratic and divorced from the masses. Many comrades do not see the importance of, or are not good at, summing up the experience of mass

struggles, but fancying themselves clever, are fond of voicing their subjectivist ideas, and so their ideas become empty and impractical. Many comrades rest content with making a general call with regard to a task and do not see the importance of, or are not good at, following it up immediately with particular and concrete guidance, and so their call remains on their lips, or on paper or in the conference room, and their leadership becomes bureaucratic. In the present rectification movement we must correct these defects and learn to use the methods of combining the leadership with the masses and the general with the particular in our study, in the check-up on work and in the examination of cadres' histories; and we must also apply these methods in all our future work.

6. Take the ideas of the masses and concentrate them, then go to the masses, persevere in the ideas and carry them through, so as to form correct ideas of leadership—such is the basic method of leadership. In the process of concentrating ideas and persevering in them, it is necessary to use the method of combining the general call with particular guidance, and this is a component part of the basic method. Formulate general ideas (general calls) out of the particular guidance given in a number of cases, and put them to the test in many different units (not only doing so yourself, but by telling others to do the same); then concentrate the new experience (sum it up) and draw up new directives for the guidance of the masses generally. Comrades should do this in the present rectification movement, and also in every other kind of work. Better leadership comes with greater skill in doing this.

7. In relaying to subordinate units any task (whether it concerns the revolutionary war, production or education; the rectification movement, check-up on work or the examination of cadres' histories; propaganda work, organizational work or anti-espionage, or other work), a higher organization and its departments should in all cases go through the leader of the lower organization concerned so that he may assume responsibility; in this way both division of labor and unified centralized leadership are achieved. A department at a higher level should not go solely to its counterpart at the lower level (for instance, a higher department concerned with organization, propaganda or anti-espionage should not go solely to the corresponding department at the lower level), leaving the person in overall change of the lower organization (such as the secretary, the chairman, the director or the school principal) in ignorance or without responsibility. Both the person in

overall charge and the person with specific responsibility should be informed and given responsibility. This centralized method, combining division of labor with unified leadership, makes it possible, through the person with over-all responsibility, to mobilize a large number of cadres—on occasion even an organization's entire personnel—to carry out a particular task, and thus to overcome shortages of cadres in individual departments and turn a good number of people into active cadres for the work in hand. This, too, is a way of combining the leadership with the masses. Take, for instance, the examining of cadres' histories. If the job is done in isolation, if it is done only by the few people in the organization department in charge of such work, it certainly cannot be done well. But if it is done through the administrative head of a particular organization or school, who mobilizes many or even all of his staff, or many or even all of his students, to take part in the work, while at the same time the leading members of the organization department at the higher level give correct guidance, applying the principle of linking the leadership with the masses, then undoubtedly the task of examining the cadres' histories will be satisfactorily accomplished.

8. In any given place, there cannot be a number of central tasks at the same time. At any one time there can be only one central task, supplemented by other tasks of a second or third order of importance. Consequently, the person with overall responsibility in the locality must take into account the history and circumstances of the struggle there and put the different tasks in their proper order; he should not act upon each instruction as it comes from the higher organization without any planning of his own, and thereby create a multitude of "central tasks" and a state of confusion and disorder. Nor should a higher organization simultaneously assign many tasks to a lower organization without indicating their relative importance and urgency or without specifying which is central, for that will lead to confusion in the steps to be taken by the lower organizations in their work and thus no definite results will be achieved. It is part of the art of leadership to take the whole situation into account and plan accordingly in the light of the historical conditions and existing circumstances of each locality, decide correctly on the center of gravity and the sequence of the work for each period, steadfastly carry through the decision, and make sure that definite results are achieved. This is also a problem of method of leadership, and

care must be taken to solve it when applying the principles of combining the leadership with the masses and the general with the particular.

9. Details concerning methods of leadership are not dealt with here; it is hoped that comrades in all localities will themselves do some hard thinking and give full play to their own creativeness on the basis of the principles here set forth. The harder the struggle, the greater the need for Communists to link their leadership closely with the demands of the vast masses, and to combine general calls closely with particular guidance, so as to smash the subjectivist and bureaucratic methods of leadership completely. All the leading comrades of our Party must at all times counterpose scientific, Marxist methods of leadership to subjectivist, bureaucratic methods of leadership and use the former to overcome the latter. Subjectivists and bureaucrats do not understand the principles of combining the leadership with the masses and the general with the particular; they greatly impede the development of the work of the Party. To combat subjectivist and bureaucratic methods of leadership, we must promote scientific, Marxist methods of leadership both extensively and intensively.

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[1] J. V. Stalin, "The Prospects of the Communist Party of Germany and the Question of Bolshevization", Works, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1954, Vol. VII, p. 39.

[2] Georgi Dimitrov, "Unity of the Working Class Against Fascism", Selected Articles and Speeches, Eng. ed., Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1951, p. 138-39.

On the Party

V. Democratic Centralism Within the Party

by Liu Shaoqi, 1945

Our Party is not simply an aggregate of individual members. It is a unified, organic body established according to a definite principle. It is a composite of its leaders and its rank and file. It is a unified body consisting of a headquarters (the Central Committee). Party organizations at all levels and the broad body of the membership, and it has been established in accordance with a definite principle, that is, democratic centralism in the Party.

Three individual Party members in a factory or village do not constitute a Party organization until they are organized according to the principle of democratic centralism. Under normal conditions, one of the three should be the leader of the group and the other two its members. In this way, in all activities there will be a leader and two followers. and only when this happens does such a group become the kind of Party organization which generates new strength. The strength of the proletariat lies in organization.

As laid down in the Party Constitution, democratic centralism means democracy on the basis of democracy and democracy under central guidance. It is both democratic and centralized. It embodies the relationship between the leader and the led, between higher and lower Party organizations, between individual Party members and the Party as a whole and among the Party's Central Committee. Party organizations at all levels and rank-and-file Party members.

What does it mean when we say that Party centralism is centralism based on democracy? It means that the leading bodies of the Party are elected by the membership on a democratic basis and enjoy their confidence. It means that the resolutions and policies of the Party are the crystallization of the ideas of the rank and file as expressed on a democratic basis, that they are decided on by the rank and file as expressed on a democratic basis, that they

are decided upon by the rank and file or its representatives and that they are then adhered to and carried out by the leadership in conjunction with the rank and file. The authority of leading bodies of the Party is conferred by the Party membership. Therefore, these bodies are empowered to exercise centralized leadership in the management of all Party affairs on behalf of the membership and to command obedience from the organization at lower levels and from Party members. Order within the Party is built on the principle that the individual is subordinate to the organization, the minority to the majority, the lower level to the higher level and all the constituent organizations to the Central Committee. In other words, the Party's centralism is based on, and not separated from democracy. It is not absolutism.

Why do we say the Party's democracy is democracy under centralized guidance? This means that every Party meeting is convened by a leading body and carried through under proper leadership. The adoption of every resolution or ruling is preceded by a full preparation and careful deliberation. Every election is based on a carefully prepared list of candidates. The Party as a whole has a unified Party Constitution and unified discipline for its membership to observe, and there is a unified leading body which the entire membership must observe. In other words, inner-Party democracy is not a democracy devoid of leadership, nor is it ultra-democracy, nor is it anarchy in the Party.

Democratic centralism is a discipline which unites the Party's back-bone leaders with the rank and file of the Party membership. It is a system through which to crystallize the ideas of the rank and file and to have the crystallized ideas carried out by them. It is the expression of the mass line within the Party.

Some members do not understand that centralism in the Party is based on democracy. Consequently, they separate their leadership from inner-Party democracy and from the rank and file of the Party membership and call this "centralism". They think that their authority as leaders need not be conferred by the Party membership but can be arrogated by themselves. They think that they need not gain leading positions through election, nor need confidence of the Party membership and the lower Party organizations, but that they can simply proclaim themselves leaders. They

think that they can arbitrarily adopt guidelines and resolutions without going through the process of pooling the ideas of the rank and file. Instead of identifying themselves with the rank and file of the Party membership, they stand above it. Instead of acting within the organization of the Party and obeying and submitting to its control, they command and control the Party and lord it over the Party organizations. With respect to their superiors, they assert independence on the pretext of preserving inner-Party democracy, while with respect to their subordinates and Party members, they suppress their democratic rights on the pretext of exercising inner-Party centralism. In fact, they neither practice democracy in dealing with their subordinates nor accept centralism in relations with their superiors. While others are obliged to adhere to resolutions adopted by the majority and observe Party discipline, they, as leaders, feel entitled to do otherwise. They observe none of such basic organizational principles as the subordination of the individual to the organization, of the minority to the majority and of the lower level to the higher level. Party rules and resolutions, in their opinion, are written for rank-and-file Party members but not for leaders. This is an anti-democratic, autocratic tendency in the Party and a reflection of the ideology characteristic of a privileged social class. It has nothing in common with our Party's centralism. It is a derivation which does, however, exist in our Party and ought to be done away with completely.

There are other comrades who, failing to understand that democracy in the Party is democracy under centralized guidance, divorce their actions from the Party's centralized leadership and from the Party as a whole. They act as they like, guided solely by their own whims and views., and they disregard the overall situation and the long range interests of the Party as a whole. They neither strictly abide by Party discipline nor carry out the decisions of the Party's leading bodies. They make all kinds of apolitical, unprincipled remarks and spread their views in disregard of organizational principles. They exaggerate things in order to sow dissention within the Party, and they indulge in endless empty talk or wrangling even during perilous emergencies. They go so far as to take advantage of the temporary confusion of some Party members who are caught unprepared, to press for votes for their own proposals in order to have their own designs carried out in the name of the "majority". These are manifestations of ultra-democracy

which have nothing in common with our Party democracy. The danger of ultra-democracy, as Comrade Mao Zedong has pointed out, “lies in the fact that it damages or even completely wrecks the Party organization and weakens or even completely undermines the Party’s fighting capacity.” [1] It stems from “the petty-bourgeoisie’s individualistic aversion to discipline. When this characteristic is brought into the Party, it develops into ultra-democratic ideas politically and organizationally. These ideas are utterly incompatible with the fighting tasks of the proletariat.” [2]

Though the tendencies towards anti-democratic absolutism and ultra-democracy found in the Party are two extremes of inner-Party life, the latter often comes into being as a kind of penalty for the former. Thus wherever there is a serious tendency to absolutism, ultra-democracy is bound to rise. Both are erroneous tendencies detrimental to and destructive of genuine Party unity and solidarity. The whole Party must maintain stern vigilance against their occurrence.

We must now fully extend democracy within the Party and bring about a high degree of inner-Party democracy. At the same time, we must affect a high degree of centralism in Party leadership on the basis of this highly developed democracy.

In his report to the Sixth Plenary Session of the Sixth Central Committee of the Party, Comrade Mao Zedong said:

Ours is a country in which small-scale production and the patriarchal system prevail, and taking the country as a whole there is as yet no democratic life; consequently, this state of affairs is reflected in our Party by insufficient democracy in Party life. This phenomenon hinders the entire Party from exercising its initiative to the full. Similarly it has led to insufficient democracy in the united front and in the mass movements.

Things are somewhat different now. Considerable progress has been made both in the democratic movement in China’s liberated areas and in inner-Party democracy, especially through the rectification movement and the review of our work. The free and penetrating discussion of Party history and the Party line by cadres prior to the present Seventh National Congress represents a vigorous flourishing of inner-Party democracy and has provided adequate preparations for the Congress. However, democracy in

the Party as a whole and in the local Party organizations is still inadequate and needs to be further fostered. This is why many provisions for the extension of inner-Party democracy are included in the Party Constitution.

Our Party is still waging a war and a protracted war at that. Until there are changes in our technical conditions and in the situation of our enemy, this war remains basically a kind of guerrilla war. Therefore, meetings and elections must be held where the guerrilla war permits. There should be no unwarranted curtailment of inner-Party democracy on the pretext of war.

In the Liberated Areas, Party congresses at all levels and general membership meetings must be called, wherever possible, according to the provisions of the Constitution in order to elect the various levels of the Party's leading bodies.

The Party Constitution provides that, in the election of a leading body in the Party, in addition to the presidium of the Congress having the rights to submit a list of candidates, every delegation and every delegate is ensured the right to nominate candidates and every elector, of the right to criticize any candidates or propose alternative ones. The candidate list must be fully discussed, and the list must serve as the basis of elections conducted either by secret ballot or by open vote.

The Party Constitution provides that local Party congresses shall be convened once every two years. This means that new leading-bodies of the local Party organizations must be elected once every two years. Between congresses, however, the convocation of conferences of representatives to deliberate and decide on immediate tasks is both necessary and feasible. In the past we held cadres' meetings of various sizes to review and decide on our work; in the future we should hold congresses and conferences of representatives. Elections should be conducted no more than once every two years, because too many elections are unnecessary and handicap our work. Therefore, in addition to Party congresses, conferences of representatives are needed to review and plan or work. Such conferences may be held once or twice a year according to local Party needs, with representatives selected by the lower Party committees. Such a conference has the power to remove or replace members of Party committees or to add further members through bi-elections. but its resolutions and the removal, replacement or addition of Party committee members must be approved by

the Party committee in question. The reason for this is that the conference is subordinate to the Party committee, although its power is greater than that of the cadres' meetings of the past.

Party congresses and conferences at the provincial or border regional, regional, county or district levels may be held in rotation For instance this year, congresses at the provincial or border regional and county levels may be held at the same time as conferences at the regional and district levels are held. This should then be reversed the next year.

The Party committees at various levels should be broadened to include people in charge of various fields of work as well as cadres who maintain close ties with the masses. According to the Constitution, a standing committee should be formed in each Party committee to take charge of the day-to-day work. Similarly, the standing committee should include leading cadres in various fields of work so that it may function as a regular leading nucleus of each of the different kinds of work in the locality. A Party committee may, when necessary, avail itself of one or two assistant secretaries to help the secretary and to ensure that nothing is neglected. The committee is not designed to just do inner-Party organizational work but should serve as the body which directs all the activities in its locality. (Inner-Party organizational work is only part of its activities and should and should be specially assigned to its organizational department.) Therefore, decisions and plans of a general character should be made only after being discussed at committee meetings. And after discussions are reached, individuals should be assigned to put them into effect.

The effort to encourage criticism and self-criticism among Party members and cadres is a crucial factor in extending inner-Party democracy. Comrade Mao Zedong stresses the importance of self-criticism in his report by pointing out that the conscientious practice of self-criticism is a hallmark distinguishing our Party from other political parties. We must develop a positive sense of responsibility among our Party members and cadres with regard to our Party's policies and work, and we must encourage them to use their brains to raise questions boldly and express their views to the point. To this end, those in charge of the leading bodies at all levels must be the first to make detailed self-criticism of the shortcomings and mistakes found in the work under their leadership. They must set an example to the Party

membership and the cadres by being fully prepared in their minds to accept criticism from others, without being upset or impatient and without resorting to repressing or punishing their critics. This is the only way to foster inner-Party democracy with success. Without such an approach, Party congresses and conferences, even if regularly convened, must be lifeless, undemocratic gatherings filled with dull and repetitious speeches and purely routine voting. Many of our comrades, including some in responsible positions, still do not know how to conduct a successful meeting. As a result, many meetings have ended in failure or produced poor results, and sometimes meetings become a heavy burden on Party membership and the masses. Clearly, holding meetings does not in itself constitute democracy. They must be well conducted so that they are permeated with democracy, criticism and self-criticism. For guidance in this area we must observe Comrade Mao Zedong's directive in the "Resolution of the Gutian Meeting", which deals with the question of how to kindle the Party members' interest in attending meetings.

Experience proves that whenever a leading comrade undertakes sincere and necessary self-criticism in public, the Party members and the people will develop their own criticism and self-criticism, have greater initiative and better unity, overcome their shortcomings and improve their work. At the same time the comrade's prestige is augmented instead of being impaired. This has been borne out by a great deal of experience both in the Party and among the masses. On the other hand,, whenever a leading comrade, lacking the spirit of self-criticism, refuses or fears to criticize or reveal his own short-comings or mistakes and tries to cover them up or, failing to be pleased, to learn of his mistakes or to express gratitude for the criticism, becomes flushed with anger, makes acrimonious retorts and looks for chances to take revenge on his critics, in that place the Party members and the people are unable to foster democracy or self-criticism, they lack initiative and unity and they are unable to overcome their short-comings and improve their work. This, of course, causes the leading comrades to lose prestige. Therefore the leading personnel of all local Party organizations have a tremendous responsibility for the promotion and broadening of democracy within the Party.

The Party Constitution provides that the leading bodies and the personnel of the Party organizations at all levels should regularly report on their work to

the Party members and lower Party organizations that have elected them. In every such report they should not only discuss the current situation and the successes but also the shortcomings, weaknesses and mistakes, and they should request comments and criticisms from the electors and the lower Party organizations. Experience shows that the responsibility for errors and shortcomings in the work of many lower Party organizations or cadres rest not with them but with the higher leading bodies. Many such errors and shortcomings are due to the failure of the higher leading bodies to assign tasks and clarify policies at the right moment. Even when they have done this, errors are still caused by their failure to be systematic and thorough with the pertinent problems, or by the fact that the very tasks and policies that they worked out are erroneous. In such cases, it is not permissible to shift the responsibility onto, or lay blame on, the lower Party organizations or Party members and cadres, because such action destroys their confidence and crushes their initiative. Of course, lower Party committees, Party members and cadres must, on their part, show a similar spirit of self-criticism towards their own shortcomings and mistakes.

The essential aim of inner-Party democracy is to promote the initiative and activity of the Party members, raise their sense of responsibility towards the cause of the Party and encourage them on their representatives to voice their views fully, within the framework of the Party Constitution. In this way they can take an active part in the Party's leadership of the people's cause and help strengthen the unity and discipline of the Party. Only through a genuine extension of inner-Party democracy can voluntary Party discipline be strengthened, inner-Party centralism established and consolidated and correct leadership given by the leading bodies. Therefore, the Party Constitution provides that the leading bodies of the Party at all levels shall carry on their work in accordance with the principle of inner-Party democracy.

Giving reign to a high degree of democracy within the Party does not mean weakening inner-Party centralism in any way. On the contrary, we intend to bring about a high degree of centralism on the basis of a high degree of democracy. The two should be combined and not be counterposed. Centralized leadership cannot be attained without the latter which can prevail only under a democratically based and highly centralized leadership. It is wrong to hold that centralized leadership will be weakened by a high

degree of democracy. Thus, the Constitution provides that, in performing their functions in accordance with the principle of inner-Party democracy, the leading bodies at all levels should not hamper inner-Party centralism or misconstrue as anarchistic tendencies (such as ascertations of "independence" or ultra-democracy) any inner-Party democracy legitimate and beneficial to centralized action.

We must see to it that inner-Party democracy contributes to the cause of the Party, which is the cause of the people, and that it neither weakens the fighting will and unity of the Party nor becomes a tool for saboteurs, anti-Party elements, splitters, time-servers and careerists. Thus the Constitution provides that a thorough review of, and debate on, the policy and line of the whole Party or of a local Party organization may be conducted only under proper guidance and when time permits, that is to say, not in times of emergency. It must be based on the resolutions of the Central Committee of the Party or of the local leading bodies as the case may be. Such a review can be conducted based on a proposal by more than one half of the members of the lower Party organizations or a proposal by a higher organization.

Inner-Party democracy must be broadened, but Party resolutions must be put into effect unconditionally. The subordination of the individual to the organization, of the lower level to the higher level, of the minority to the majority and of all the constituent Party organizations to the Central Committee—this principle laid down in the Constitution must be observed unconditionally.

Some comrades might impose such conditions as refusing to adhere to the resolutions or instructions unless they consider them correct, unless they think that their superior is qualified in terms ability, rank, length of Party membership or cultural level, or unless the leader has treated them well or belongs to the same group". It must be pointed out that such conditions are unjustifiable. A Communist expresses how keen his sense of discipline is and how strictly he observes discipline precisely when he is in danger or when serious differences arise between him and the Party organization over issues of principle or relations among comrades. It is only when he unconditionally carries out organizational principles from a minority position that he can be considered a Party member with a keen sense of

discipline and principle, who looks at the total situation and knows that local interests should be subordinate to overall interests, less significant issues to greater issues, and that specific differences of principle and differences over relations among comrades should be subordinate the supreme interests of Party unity and Party discipline.

Under no circumstances should we Communists encourage blind obedience. Since we are now in the midst of guerrilla warfare conducted over vast rural areas and since the conditions differ widely inside and outside these areas, we should pursue a policy of "decentralized operations under centralized leadership" in our work. Policies which either over-centralize operations or put decentralized operations and centralized leadership on an equal footing are erroneous. By decentralized operations, we do not mean assertions of "independence"; we mean independent actions and the ability to operate independently. Rather than being separated from centralized leadership, decentralized operations must be put under it. Conditions being what they are, it often happens that the decisions and instructions of a leading body are necessarily of a general character and so fail to cover the conditions in all places. Consequently, while applicable to ordinary areas, such decisions and instructions suit certain special areas, and it also often happens that they contain mistakes and are impracticable. In such cases, we should not advocate blind implementation or obedience. Instead, we should encourage intelligent and conscientious action which calls for serious study of the circumstances, the decisions and instructions. When we find that they contain mistakes or are at variance with the local situation, we should have the courage to bring the matter to the attention of a higher body with a request for their withdrawal or an amendment. We should not enforce them blindly and obstinately, for this will lead to a waste of money and manpower and isolate us from the masses. By pointing to mistakes, a subordinate is by no means being disobedient to his superior, nor is he asserting "independence", but is conscientiously carrying out decisions and instructions. Such Party members are the best Party members, for they are capable not merely of independent deliberation but of also helping to correct the errors and shortcomings of the higher body. They should be especially commended.

There are three possible approaches towards the decisions and instructions of the higher bodies. The first is to carry out those decisions and

instructions which appeal to you and ignore those which do not. This is an assertion of “independence” pure and simple, whatever the pretext and must not be permitted. The second is to carry them out blindly and mechanically, without taking the trouble to study them or the specific circumstances. This is a blind rather than a careful implementation of the decisions and instructions of a higher body and is consequently also impermissible. And the third is to study both the circumstances and the decisions and instructions, to resolutely carry out what is practicable and to report what is impracticable to the higher body, giving detailed reasons and requesting amendments. This is the way to carry out decisions and instructions intelligently and conscientiously, and it is the only correct approach. Not only do we not oppose, but we should by every means encourage this initiative and activity on the part of every Party member. While opposing any disregard for discipline or assertion of “independence”, the Party encourages the initiative of every member in tackling problems and doing work independently under the guidance of the Party line.

A leading body should allow its lower organizations and members to make suggestions, raise questions and propose revisions with regard to its decisions and instructions which, when the existence of shortcomings or mistakes is substantiated, should be corrected accordingly. If the lower ranks are wrong, a satisfactory explanation should be given to straighten out their ideas, and no harsh measures should be taken against them. If the higher body insists on the execution of a decision or instruction despite the appeals for revision, then it should be carried out and the lower ranks must not persist in their own stand or resist the decision.

The discipline of the Communist Party is based on voluntary subordination. It should not be turned into something mechanical, which restricts the activity and initiative of the membership. The sense of discipline and the initiative of the membership should go hand in hand.

The Party Constitution provides that a Party organization at every level shall ensure that the publications under the guidance disseminate the decisions and policies of higher organizations and of the central organs. This is necessitated by the Party’s unified and national character. Decisions and policies should be disseminated in all places, while conflicting ideas should not be publicized at all Marxist ideology should be disseminated

while ideologies contrary to it should not. This task is not being satisfactorily performed by some of our lower Party organizations. Some papers have failed to give sufficient publicity to the decisions and policies of the Central Committee and have sometimes even carried articles at variance with them. Party organizations at all levels must check up on this and make corrections.

With regard to national issues, the Party Constitution provides that prior to a statement or decision by the Central Committee, no lower Party organizations or their leading personnel shall take the liberty of making public their views or decisions on such issues, although they may hold discussions among themselves and put forward their proposals to the Central Committee. This is necessary to ensure the Party's unified and national character. The Party as a whole can have but one orientation or line to follow, not several. Lower Party organizations should not exceed their powers by making their views public in place of, or prior to the Central Committee on those issues which the Committee should and must decide upon and make public. No leading comrade in the Party, including members of the Central Committee, should publicize their views on issues of a national character without the Central Committee's approval. While they may discuss their views at the meetings of local Party committees and make suggestions to the Central Committee, it is impermissible for them to make public, either inside or outside the Party, views not yet made known by the Central Committee, or to dispatch circular messages among other local Party committees for the dissemination of these views. The reason for this is that, should such views or decisions conflict with those of the Central Committee, this would adversely affect the Party and the people and aid our enemies. When we lacked or were short of radio facilities, we didn't stress this point. But now that such facilities are in general use, it must be emphasized. The Central Committee has called attention to this a number of times during the War of Resistance Against Japan.

Concerning local questions, the Constitution authorizes lower Party organizations to make independent decisions, provided these decisions do not conflict with those of the Central Committee or of other higher organizations. In this connection, higher organizations should, on their part, avoid interfering in the affairs of lower organizations and refrain from making decisions for them. While it is necessary for a higher body to make

suggestions to a lower organization in order to help it to resolve questions correctly, the power of decision must rest with the latter.

Our Party organizations are still working underground in many areas. In such circumstances they must adopt special forms to carry out their tasks. Hence the Constitution provides that those organizational forms and methods of work which are suited to overt Party organizations but not to the covert ones may be modified. This provision is necessary. Organizational principles provided in the Constitution must be carried out by the whole Party, but the organizational forms and methods of work should be changed according to changing circumstances and conditions. This point has been already dealt with.

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[1] "On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party," *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* , Eng. ed., FLP, Beijing, 1977, Vol. 1, p. 108.

[2] "On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party," *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* , Eng. ed., FLP, Beijing, 1977, Vol. 1, p. 108.

On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party

by Mao Zedong, 1929

There are various non-proletarian ideas in the Communist Party organization in the Fourth Red Army which greatly hinder the application of the Party's correct line. Unless these ideas are thoroughly corrected, the Fourth Army cannot possibly shoulder the tasks assigned to it in China's great revolutionary struggle. The source of such incorrect ideas in this Party organization lies, of course, in the fact that its basic units are composed largely of peasants and other elements of petty-bourgeois origin; yet the failure of the Party's leading bodies to wage a concerted and determined struggle against these incorrect ideas and to educate the members in the Party's correct line is also an important cause of their existence and growth. In accordance with the spirit of the September letter of the Central Committee, this congress hereby points out the manifestations of various non-proletarian ideas in the Party organization in the Fourth Army, their sources, and the methods of correcting them, and calls upon all comrades to eliminate them thoroughly.

On the Purely Military Viewpoint

The purely military viewpoint is very highly developed among a number of comrades in the Red Army. It manifests itself as follows:

1. These comrades regard military affairs and politics as opposed to each other and refuse to recognize that military affairs are only one means of accomplishing political tasks. Some even say, "If you are good militarily, naturally you are good politically; if you are not good militarily, you cannot be any good politically"--this is to go a step further and give military affairs a leading position over politics.

2. They think that the task of the Red Army like that of the White army, is merely to fight. They do not understand that the Chinese Red Army is an armed body for carrying out the political tasks of the revolution. Especially at present, the Red Army should certainly not confine itself to fighting; besides fighting to destroy the enemy's military strength, it should shoulder such important tasks as doing propaganda among the masses, organizing the masses, arming them, helping them to establish revolutionary political power and setting up Party organizations. The Red Army fights not merely for the sake of fighting but in order to conduct propaganda among the masses, organize them, arm them, and help them to establish revolutionary political power. Without these objectives, fighting loses its meaning and the Red Army loses the reason for its existence.

3. Hence, organizationally, these comrades subordinate the departments of the Red Army doing political work to those doing military work, and put forward the slogan, "Let Army Headquarters handle outside matters." If allowed to develop, this idea would involve the danger of estrangement from the masses, control of the government by the army and departure from proletarian leadership-- it would be to take the path of warlordism like the Kuomintang army.

4. At the same time, in propaganda work they overlook the importance of propaganda teams. On the question of mass organization, they neglect the organizing of soldiers' committees in the army and the organizing of the local workers and peasants. As a result, both propaganda and organizational work are abandoned.

5. They become conceited when a battle is won and dispirited when a battle is lost.

6. Selfish departmentalism--they think only of the Fourth Army and do not realize that it is an important task of the Red Army to arm the local masses. This is cliquism in a magnified form.

7. Unable to see beyond their limited environment in the Fourth Army, a few comrades believe that no other revolutionary forces exist. Hence their extreme addiction to the idea of conserving strength and avoiding action. This is a remnant of opportunism.

8. Some comrades, disregarding the subjective and objective conditions, suffer from the malady of revolutionary impetuosity; they will not take pains to do minute and detailed work among the masses, but, riddled with illusions, want only to do big things. This is a remnant of putschism. [1]

The sources of the purely military viewpoint are:

1. A low political level. From this flows the failure to recognize the role of political leadership in the army and to recognize that the Red Army and the White army are fundamentally different.

2. The mentality of mercenaries. Many prisoners captured in past battles have joined the Red Army, and such elements bring with them a markedly

mercenary outlook, thereby providing a basis in the lower ranks for the purely military viewpoint.

3. From the two preceding causes there arises a third, overconfidence in military strength and absence of confidence in the strength of the masses of the people.

4 The Party's failure actively to attend to and discuss military work is also a reason for the emergence of the purely military viewpoint among a number of comrades.

The methods of correction are as follows:

1. Raise the political level in the Party by means of education, destroy the theoretical roots of the purely military viewpoint, and be dear on the fundamental difference between the Red Army and the White army. At the same time, eliminate the remnants of opportunism and putschism and break down the selfish departmentalism of the Fourth Army.

2. Intensify the political training of officers and men and especially the education of ex-prisoners. At the same time, as far as possible let the local governments select workers and peasants experienced in struggle to join the Red Army, thus organizationally weakening or even eradicating the purely military viewpoint.

3. Arouse the local Party organizations to criticize the Party organizations in the Red Army and the organs of mass political power to criticize the Red Army itself, in order to influence the Party organizations and the officers and men of the Red Army.

4. The Party must actively attend to and discuss military work. All the work must be discussed and decided upon by the Party before being carried out by the rank and file.

5. Draw up Red Army rules and regulations which dearly define its tasks, the relationship between its military and its political apparatus, the relationship between the Red Army and the masses of the people, and the powers and functions of the soldiers' committees and their relationship with the military and political organizations.

On Ultra-Democracy

Since the Fourth Army of the Red Army accepted the directives of the Central Committee, there has been a great decrease in the manifestations of ultra-democracy. For example, Party decisions are now carried out fairly well; and no longer does anyone bring up such erroneous demands as that the Red Army should apply "democratic centralism from the bottom to the top" or should "let the lower levels discuss all problems first, and then let the higher levels decide". Actually, however, this decrease is only temporary and superficial and does not mean that ultra-democratic ideas have already been eliminated. In other words, ultra-democracy is still deep-rooted in the minds of many comrades. Witness the various expressions of reluctance to carry out Party decisions.

The methods of correction are as follows:

1. In the sphere of theory, destroy the roots of ultra-democracy. First, it should be pointed out that the danger of ultra-democracy lies in the fact that it damages or even completely wrecks the Party organization and weakens or even completely undermines the Party's fighting capacity, rendering the Party incapable of fulfilling its fighting tasks and thereby causing the defeat of the revolution. Next, it should be pointed out that the source of ultra-democracy consists in the petty bourgeoisie's individualistic aversion to discipline. When this characteristic is brought into the Party, it develops into ultra-democratic ideas politically and organizationally. These ideas are utterly incompatible with the fighting tasks of the proletariat.

2. In the sphere of organization, ensure democracy under centralized guidance. It should be done on the following lines:

(1) The leading bodies of the Party must give a correct line of guidance and kind solutions when problems arise, in order to establish themselves as centers of leadership.

(2) The higher bodies must be familiar with the life of the masses and with the situation in the lower bodies so as to have an objective basis for correct guidance.

(3) No Party organization at any level should make casual decisions in solving problems. Once a decision is reached, it must be firmly carried out.

(4) All decisions of any importance made by the Party's higher bodies must be promptly transmitted to the lower bodies and the Party rank and file. The method is to call meetings of activists or general membership meetings of the Party branches or even of the columns [2] (when circumstances permit) and to assign people to make reports at such meetings.

(5) The lower bodies of the Party and the Party rank and file must discuss the higher bodies' directives in detail in order to understand their meaning thoroughly and decide on the methods of carrying them out.

On the Disregard of Organizational Discipline

Disregard of organizational discipline in the Party organization in the Fourth Army manifests itself as follows:

A. Failure of the minority to submit to the majority. For example, when a minority finds its motion voted down, it does not sincerely carry out the Party decisions.

The methods of correction are as follows:

1. At meetings, all participants should be encouraged to voice their opinions as fully as possible. The rights and wrongs in any controversy should be clarified without compromise or glossing over. In order to reach a clear-cut conclusion, what cannot be settled at one meeting should be discussed at another, provided there is no interference with the work.

2. One requirement of Party discipline is that the minority should submit to the majority. If the view of the minority has been rejected, it must support the decision passed by the majority. If necessary, it can bring up the maker for reconsideration at the next meeting, but apart from that it must not act against the decision in any way.

B. Criticism made without regard to organizational discipline:

1. Inner-Party criticism is a weapon for strengthening the Party organization and increasing its fighting capacity. In the Party organization of the Red Army, however, criticism is not always of this character, and sometimes turns into personal attack. As a result, it damages the Party organization as well as individuals. This is a manifestation of petty-bourgeois individualism. The method of correction is to help Party members

understand that the purpose of criticism is to increase the Party's fighting capacity in order to achieve victory in the class struggle and that it should not be used as a means of personal attack.

2. Many Party members make their criticisms not inside, but outside, the Party. The reason is that the general membership has not yet grasped the importance of the Party organization (its meetings and so forth), and sees no difference between criticism inside and outside the organization. The method of correction is to educate Party members so that they understand the importance of Party organization and make their criticisms of Party committees or comrades at Party meetings.

On Absolute Equalitarianism

Absolute equalitarianism became quite serious in the Red Army at one time. Here are some examples. On the matter of allowances to wounded soldiers, there were objections to differentiating between light and serious cases, and the demand was raised for equal allowances for all. When officers rode on horseback, it was regarded not as something necessary for performing their duties but as a sign of inequality. Absolutely equal distribution of supplies was demanded, and there was objection to somewhat larger allotments in special cases. In the hauling of rice, the demand was made that all should carry the same load on their backs, irrespective of age or physical condition. Equality was demanded in the allotment of billets, and the Headquarters would be abused for occupying larger rooms. Equality was demanded in the assignment of fatigue duties, and there was unwillingness to do a little more than the next man. It even went so far that when there were two wounded men but only one stretcher, neither could be carried away because each refused to yield priority to the other. Absolute equalitarianism, as shown in these examples, is still very serious among officers and soldiers of the Red Army.

Absolute equalitarianism, like ultra-democracy in political matters, is the product of a handicraft and small peasant economy--the only difference being that the one manifests itself in material affairs, while the other manifests itself in political affairs.

The method of correction: We should point out that, before the abolition of capitalism, absolute equalitarianism is a mere illusion of peasants and small proprietors, and that even under socialism there can be no absolute equality, for material things will then be distributed on the principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work" as well as on that of meeting the needs of the work. The distribution of material things in the Red Army must be more or less equal, as in the case of equal pay for officers and men, because this is required by the present circumstances of

the struggle. But absolute equalitarianism beyond reason must be opposed because it is not required by the struggle; on the contrary, it hinders the struggle.

On Subjectivism

Subjectivism exists to a serious degree among some Party members, causing great harm to the analysis of the political situation and the guidance of the work. The reason is that subjective analysis of a political situation and subjective guidance of work inevitably result either in opportunism or in putschism. As for subjective criticism, loose and groundless talk or suspiciousness, such practices inside the Party often breed unprincipled disputes and undermine the Party organization.

Another point that should be mentioned in connection with inner-Party criticism is that some comrades ignore the major issues and confine their attention to minor points when they make their criticism. They do not understand that the main task of criticism is to point out political and organizational mistakes. As to personal shortcomings, unless they are related to political and organizational mistakes, there is no need to be overcritical and to embarrass the comrades concerned. Moreover, once such criticism develops, there is the great danger that the Party members will concentrate entirely on minor faults, and everyone will become timid and overcautious and forget the Party's political tasks.

The main method of correction is to educate Party members so that a political and scientific spirit pervades their thinking and their Party life. To this end we must: (1) teach Party members to apply the Marxist-Leninist method in analyzing a political situation and appraising the class forces, instead of making a subjective analysis and appraisal; (2) direct the attention of Party members to social and economic investigation and study, so as to determine the tactics of struggle and methods of work, and help comrades to understand that without investigation of actual conditions they will fall into the pit of fantasy and putschism; and (3) in inner-Party criticism, guard against subjectivism, arbitrariness and the vulgarization of criticism; statements should be based on facts and criticism should center on politics.

On Individualism

The tendency towards individualism in the Red Army Party organization manifests itself as follows:

1. Retaliation. Some comrades, after being criticized inside the Party by a soldier comrade, look for opportunities to retaliate outside the Party, and one way is to beat or abuse the comrade in question. They also seek to retaliate within the Party. "You have criticized me at this meeting, so I'll find some way to pay you back at the next." Such retaliation arises from purely personal considerations, to the neglect of the interests of the class and of the Party as a whole. Its target is not the enemy class, but individuals in our own ranks. It is a corrosive which weakens the organization and its fighting capacity.

2. "Small group" mentality. Some comrades consider only the interests of their own small group and ignore the general interest. Although on the surface this does not seem to be the pursuit of personal interests, in reality it exemplifies the narrowest individualism and has a strong corrosive and centrifugal effect. "Small group" mentality used to be rife in the Red Army, and although there has been some improvement as a result of criticism, there are still survivals and further effort is needed to overcome it.

3. The "employee" mentality. Some comrades do not understand that the Party and the Red Army, of which they are members, are both instruments for carrying out the tasks of the revolution. They do not realize that they themselves are makers of the revolution, but think that their responsibility is merely to their individual superiors and not to the revolution. This passive mentality of an "employee" of the revolution is also a manifestation of individualism. It explains why there are not very many activists who work unconditionally for the revolution. Unless it is eliminated, the number of activists will not grow and the heavy burden of the revolution will remain on the shoulders of a small number of people, much to the detriment of the struggle.

4. Pleasure-seeking. In the Red Army there are also quite a few people whose individualism finds expression in pleasure-seeking. They always hope that their unit will march into big cities. They want to go there not to work but to enjoy themselves. The last thing they want is to work in the Red areas where life is hard.

5. Passivity. Some comrades become passive and stop working whenever anything goes against their wishes. This is mainly due to. lack of education, though sometimes it is also due to the leadership's improper conduct of affairs, assignment of work or enforcement of discipline.

6. The desire to leave the army. The number of people who ask for transfers from the Red Army to local work is on the increase The reason for this does not lie entirely with the individuals but also with: (1) the material hardships of life in the Red Army, (2) exhaustion after long struggle, and (3) the leadership's improper conduct of affairs, assignment of work or enforcement of discipline.

The method of correction is primarily to strengthen education so as to rectify individualism ideologically. Next, it is to conduct affairs, make assignments and enforce discipline in a proper way. In addition, ways must be found to improve the material life of the Red Army, and every available opportunity must be utilized for rest and rehabilitation in order to improve material conditions. In our educational work we must explain that in its social origin individualism is a reflection within the Party of petty-bourgeois and bourgeois ideas.

On the Ideology of Roving Rebel Bands

The political ideology of roving rebel bands has emerged in the Red Army because the proportion of vagabond elements is large and because there are great masses of vagabonds in China, especially in the southern provinces. This ideology manifests itself as follows: (1) Some people want to increase our political influence only by means of roving guerrilla actions, but are unwilling to increase it by undertaking the arduous task of building up base areas and establishing the people's political power. (2) In expanding the Red Army, some people follow the line of "hiring men and buying horses" and "recruiting deserters and accepting mutineers", [3] rather than the line of expanding the local Red Guards and the local troops and thus developing the main forces of the Red Army. (3) Some people lack the patience to carry on arduous struggles together with the masses, and only want to go to the big cities to eat and drink to their hearts' content. All these manifestations of the ideology of roving rebels seriously hamper the Red Army in performing its proper tasks; consequently, its eradication is an important objective in the ideological struggle within the Red Army Party organization. It must be understood that the ways of roving rebels of the Huang Chao [4] or Li Chuang [5] type are not permissible under present-day conditions.

The methods of correction are as follows:

1. Intensify education, criticize incorrect ideas, and eradicate the ideology of roving rebel bands.

2. Intensify education among the basic sections of the Red Army and among recently recruited captives to counter the vagabond outlook.

3. Draw active workers and peasants experienced in struggle into the ranks of the Red Army so as to change its composition.

4. Create new units of the Red Army from among the masses of militant workers and peasants.

On the Remnants of Putschism

The Party organization in the Red Army has already waged struggles against putschism, but not yet to a sufficient extent. Therefore, remnants of this ideology still exist in the Red Army. Their manifestations are: (1) blind action regardless of subjective and objective conditions; (2) inadequate and irresolute application of the Party's policies for the cities; (3) slack military discipline, especially in moments of defeat; (4) acts of house-burning by some units; and (5) the practices of shooting deserters and of inflicting corporal punishment, both of which smack of putschism. In its social origins, putschism is a combination of *lumpen* -proletarian and petty-bourgeois ideology.

The methods of correction are as follows:

1. Eradicate putschism ideologically.

2. Correct putschist behavior through rules, regulations and policies.

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[1] For a brief period after the defeat of the revolution in 1927, a "Left" putschist tendency arose in the Communist Party. Regarding the Chinese revolution as a "permanent revolution" and the revolutionary situation in China as a "permanent upsurge", the putschist comrades refused to organize an orderly retreat and, adopting the methods of commandism and relying only on a small number of Party members and a small section of the masses, erroneously attempted to stage a series of local uprisings throughout the country, which had no prospect of success. Such putschist activities were widespread at the end of 1927 but gradually subsided in the beginning of 1928, though sentiments in favor of putschism still survived among some comrades.

[2] In the guerrilla system of organization, a column corresponded to a division in the regular army, with a complement much more flexible and usually much smaller than that of a regular division.

[3] These two Chinese idioms refer to the methods which some rebels in Chinese history adopted to expand their forces. In the application of these methods, attention was paid to numbers rather than to quality, and people of all sorts were indiscriminately recruited to swell the ranks.

[4] Huang Chao was the leader of the peasant revolts towards the end of the Tang Dynasty. In A.D. 875, starting from his home district Tsaochow (now Hotse County in Shantung), Huang led armed peasants in victorious battles against the imperial forces and styled himself the "Heaven-Storming General". In the course of a decade he swept over most of the provinces in the Yellow, Yangtse, Huai and Pearl river valleys, reaching as far as Kwangsi. He finally broke through the Tungkuan pass, captured the imperial capital of Changan (now Sian in Shensi), and was crowned Emperor of Chi. Internal dissensions and attacks by the non-Han tribal allies of the Tang forces compelled Huang to abandon Changan and retreat to his native district, where he committed suicide. The ten years' war fought by him is one of the most famous peasant wars in Chinese history. Dynastic historians record that "all people suffering from heavy taxes and levies rallied to him". But as he merely carried on roving warfare without ever establishing relatively consolidated base areas, his forces were called "roving rebel bands".

[5] Li Chuang, short for Li Tzu-cheng the King Chuang (the Dare-All King), native of Michih, northern Shensi, was the leader of a peasant revolt which led to the overthrow of the Ming Dynasty. The revolt first started in northern Shensi in 1628. Li joined the forces led by Kao Ying-hsiang and campaigned through Honan and Anhwei and back to Shensi. After Kao's death in 1636, Li succeeded him, becoming King Chuang, and campaigned in and out of the provinces of Shensi, Szechuan, Honan and Hupeh Finally he captured the imperial capital of Peking in 1644, whereupon the last Ming emperor committed suicide. The chief slogan he spread among the masses was "Support King Chuang, and pay no grain taxes". Another slogan of his to enforce discipline among his men ran: "Any murder means the killing of my father; any rape means the violation of my mother." Thus, he won the support of the masses and his movement became the main current of the peasant revolts raging all over the country. As he, too, roamed about without ever establishing relatively consolidated base areas, he was eventually defeated by Wu San-kuei, a Ming general who colluded with the Ching troops in a joint aback on Li.

Combat Liberalism

by Mao Zedong, 1937

We stand for active ideological struggle because it is the weapon for ensuring unity within the Party and the revolutionary organizations in the interest of our fight. Every Communist and revolutionary should take up this weapon.

But liberalism rejects ideological struggle and stands for unprincipled peace, thus giving rise to a decadent, Philistine attitude and bringing about political degeneration in certain units and individuals in the Party and the revolutionary organizations.

Liberalism manifests itself in various ways.

To let things slide for the sake of peace and friendship when a person has clearly gone wrong, and refrain from principled argument because he is an old acquaintance, a fellow townsman, a schoolmate, a close friend, a loved one, an old colleague or old subordinate. Or to touch on the matter lightly instead of going into it thoroughly, so as to keep on good terms. The result is that both the organization and the individual are harmed. This is one type of liberalism.

To indulge in irresponsible criticism in private instead of actively putting forward one's suggestions to the organization. To say nothing to people to their faces but to gossip behind their backs, or to say nothing at a meeting but to gossip afterwards. To show no regard at all for the principles of collective life but to follow one's own inclination. This is a second type .

To let things drift if they do not affect one personally; to say as little as possible while knowing perfectly well what is wrong, to be worldly wise and play safe and seek only to avoid blame. This is a third type .

Not to obey orders but to give pride of place to one's own opinions. To demand special consideration from the organization but to reject its discipline. This is a fourth type .

To indulge in personal attacks, pick quarrels, vent personal spite or seek revenge instead of entering into an argument and struggling against incorrect views for the sake of unity or progress or getting the work done properly. This is a fifth type .

To hear incorrect views without rebutting them and even to hear counter-revolutionary remarks without reporting them, but instead to take them calmly as if nothing had happened. This is a sixth type .

To be among the masses and fail to conduct propaganda and agitation or speak at meetings or conduct investigations and inquiries among them, and instead to be indifferent to them and show no concern for their well-being, forgetting that one is a Communist and behaving as if one were an ordinary non-Communist. This is a seventh type .

To see someone harming the interests of the masses and yet not feel indignant, or dissuade or stop him or reason with him, but to allow him to continue. This is an eighth type .

To work half-heartedly without a definite plan or direction; to work perfunctorily and muddle along—"So long as one remains a monk, one goes on tolling the bell." This is a ninth type .

To regard oneself as having rendered great service to the revolution, to pride oneself on being a veteran, to disdain minor assignments while being quite unequal to major tasks, to be slipshod in work and slack in study. This is a tenth type .

To be aware of one's own mistakes and yet make no attempt to correct them, taking a liberal attitude towards oneself. This is an eleventh type .

We could name more. But these eleven are the principal types.

They are all manifestations of liberalism.

Liberalism is extremely harmful in a revolutionary collective. It is a corrosive which eats away unity, undermines cohesion, causes apathy and creates dissension. It robs the revolutionary ranks of compact organization and strict discipline, prevents policies from being carried through and alienates the Party organizations from the masses which the Party leads. It is an extremely bad tendency.

Liberalism stems from petty-bourgeois selfishness, it places personal interests first and the interests of the revolution second, and this gives rise to ideological, political and organizational liberalism.

People who are liberals look upon the principles of Marxism as abstract dogma. They approve of Marxism, but are not prepared to practice it or to practice it in full; they are not prepared to replace their liberalism with Marxism. These people have their Marxism, but they have their liberalism as well—they talk Marxism but practice liberalism; they apply Marxism to others but liberalism to themselves. They keep both kinds of goods in stock and find a use for each. This is how the minds of certain people work.

Liberalism is a manifestation of opportunism and conflicts fundamentally with Marxism. It is negative and objectively has the effect of helping the enemy; that is why the enemy welcomes its preservation in our midst. Such being its nature, there should be no place for it in the ranks of the revolution.

We must use Marxism, which is positive in spirit, to overcome liberalism, which is negative. A Communist should have largeness of mind and he should be staunch and active, looking upon the interests of the revolution as his very life and subordinating his personal interests to those of the revolution; always and everywhere he should adhere to principle and wage a tireless struggle against all incorrect ideas and actions, so as to consolidate the collective life of the Party and strengthen the ties between the Party and the masses; he should be more concerned about the Party and the masses than about any private person, and more concerned about others than about himself. Only thus can he be considered a Communist.

All loyal, honest, active and upright Communists must unite to oppose the liberal tendencies shown by certain people among us, and set them on the right path. This is one of the tasks on our ideological front.

Oppose Book Worship

by Mao Zedong, 1930

I. No Investigation, No Right to Speak

Unless you have investigated a problem, you will be deprived of the right to speak on it. Isn't that too harsh? Not in the least. When you have not probed into a problem, into the present facts and its past history, and know nothing of its essentials, whatever you say about it will undoubtedly be nonsense. Talking nonsense solves no problems, as everyone knows, so why is it unjust to deprive you of the right to speak? Quite a few comrades always keep their eyes shut and talk nonsense, and for a Communist that is disgraceful. How can a Communist keep his eyes shut and talk nonsense?

It won' t do!

It won't do!

You must investigate!

You must not talk nonsense!

II. To Investigate a Problem is to Solve It

You can' t solve a problem? Well, get down and investigate the present facts and its past history! When you have investigated the problem thoroughly, you will know how to solve it. Conclusions invariably come after investigation, and not before. Only a blockhead cudgels his brains on his own, or together with a group, to "find solution" or "evolve an idea" without making any investigation. It must be stressed that this cannot possibly lead to any effective solution or any good idea. In other words, he is bound to arrive at a wrong solution and a wrong idea.

There are not a few comrades doing inspection work, as well as guerrilla leaders and cadres newly in office, who like to make political pronouncements the moment they arrive at a place and who strut about, criticizing this and condemning that when they have only seen the surface of things or minor details. Such purely subjective nonsensical talk is indeed detestable. These people are bound to make a mess of things, lose the confidence of the masses and prove incapable of solving any problem at all.

When they come across difficult problems, quite a number of people in leading positions simply heave a sigh without being able to solve them. They lose patience and ask to be transferred on the ground that they "have not the ability and cannot do the job"; These are cowards' words. Just get moving on your two legs, go the rounds of every section placed under your charge and "inquire into everything" [1] as Confucius did, and then you will be able to solve the problems, however little is your ability; for although your head may be empty before you go out of doors, it will be empty no longer when you return but will contain all sorts of material necessary for the solution of the problems, and that is how problems are solved. Must you go out of doors? Not necessarily. You can call a fact-finding meeting of people familiar with the situation in order to get at the source of what you call a difficult problem and come to know how it stands now, and then it will be easy to solve your difficult problem.

Investigation may be likened to the long months of pregnancy, and solving a problem to the day of birth. To investigate a problem is, indeed, to solve it.

III. Oppose Book Worship

Whatever is written in a book is right — such is still the mentality of culturally backward Chinese peasants. Strangely enough, within the Communist Party there are also people who always say in a discussion, "Show me where it's written in the book." When we say that a directive of a higher organ of leadership is correct, that is not just because it comes from "a higher organ of leadership" but because its contents conform with both

the objective and subjective circumstances of the struggle and meet its requirements. It is quite wrong to take a formalistic attitude and blindly carry out directives without discussing and examining them in the light of actual conditions simply because they come from a higher organ. It is the mischief done by this formalism which explains why the line and tactics of the Party do not take deeper root among the masses. To carry out a directive of a higher organ blindly, and seemingly without any disagreement, is not really to carry it out but is the most artful way of opposing or sabotaging it.

The method of studying the social sciences exclusively from the book is likewise extremely dangerous and may even lead one onto the road of counter-revolution. Clear proof of this is provided by the fact that whole batches of Chinese Communists who confined themselves to books in their study of the social sciences have turned into counter-revolutionaries. When we say Marxism is correct, it is certainly not because Marx was a "prophet" but because his theory has been proved correct in our practice and in our struggle. We need Marxism in our struggle. In our acceptance of his theory no such formalization of mystical notion as that of "prophecy" ever enters our minds. Many who have read Marxist books have become renegades from the revolution, whereas illiterate workers often grasp Marxism very well. Of course, we should study Marxist books, but this study must be integrated with our country's actual conditions. We need books, but we must overcome book worship, which is divorced from the actual situation.

How can we overcome book worship? The only way is to investigate the actual situation.

IV. Without Investigating the Actual Situation, There is Bound to be an Idealist Appraisal of Class Forces and an Idealist Guidance in Work, Resulting Either in Opportunism or in Putschism

Do you doubt this conclusion? Facts will force you to accept it. Just try and appraise the political situation or guide the struggle without making any

investigation, and you will see whether or not such appraisal or guidance is groundless and idealist and whether or not it will lead to opportunist or putschist errors. Certainly, it will. This is not because of failure to make careful plans before taking action but because of failure to study the specific social situation carefully before making the plans, as often happens in our Red Army guerrilla units. Officers of the Li Kuei [2] type do not discriminate when they punish the men for offenses. As a result, the offenders feel they have been unfairly treated, many disputes ensue, and the leaders lose all prestige. Does this not happen frequently in the Red Army?

We must wipe out idealism and guard against all opportunist and putschist errors before we can succeed in winning over the masses and defeating the enemy. The only way to wipe out idealism is to make the effort and investigate the actual situation.

V. The Aim of Social and Economic Investigation is to Arrive at a Correct Appraisal of Class Forces and Then to Formulate Correct Tactics for the Struggle

This is our answer to the question: Why do we have to investigate social and economic conditions? Accordingly, the object of our investigation is all the social classes and not fragmentary social phenomena. Of late, the comrades in the Fourth Army of the Red Army have generally given attention to the work of investigation, [3] but the method many of them employ is wrong. The results of their investigation are therefore as trivial as a grocer's accounts, or resemble the many strange tales a country bumpkin hears when he comes to town, or are like a distant view of a populous city from a mountain top. This kind of investigation is of little use and cannot achieve our main purpose. Our main purpose is to learn the political and economic situation of the various social classes. The outcome of our investigation should be a picture of the present situation of each class and the ups and downs of its development. For example, when we investigate the composition of the peasantry, not only must we know the number of owner-peasants, semi-owner peasants and tenant-peasants, who are

differentiated according to tenancy relationships, but more especially we must know the number of rich peasants, middle peasants and poor peasants, who are differentiated according to class or stratum. When we investigate the composition of the merchants, not only must we know the number in each trade, such as grain, clothing, medicinal herbs, etc., but more especially we must know the number of small merchants, middle merchants and big merchants. We should investigate not only the state of each trade, but more especially the class relations within it. We should investigate the relationships not only between the different trades but more especially between the different classes. Our chief method of investigation must be to dissect the different social classes, the ultimate purpose being to understand their interrelations, to arrive at a correct appraisal of class forces and then to formulate the correct tactics for the struggle, defining which classes constitute the main force in the revolutionary struggle, which classes are to be won over as allies and which classes are to be overthrown. This is our sole purpose.

What are the social classes requiring investigation?

They are:

The industrial proletariat
The handicraft workers
The farm laborers
The poor peasants
The urban poor
The *lumpen* -Proletariat
The master handicraftsmen
The small merchants
The middle peasants
The rich peasants
The landlords
The commercial bourgeoisie
The industrial bourgeoisie

In our investigation we should give attention to the state of all these classes or strata. Only the industrial proletariat and industrial bourgeoisie are absent in the areas where we are now working, and we constantly come across all the others. Our tactics of struggle are tactics in relation to all these classes and strata.

Another serious shortcoming in our past investigations has been the undue stress on the countryside to the neglect of the towns, so that many comrades have always been vague about our tactics towards the urban poor and the commercial bourgeoisie. The development of the struggle has enabled us to leave the mountains for the plains . [4] We have descended physically, but we are still up in the mountains mentally. We must understand the towns as well as the countryside, or we shall be unable to meet the needs of the revolutionary struggle.

VI. Victory in China’s Revolutionary Struggle Will Depend on the Chinese Comrades’ Understanding of Chinese Conditions

The aim of our struggle is to attain socialism via the stage of democracy. In this task, the first step is to complete the democratic revolution by winning the majority of the working class and arousing the peasant masses and the urban poor for the overthrow of the landlord class, imperialism and the Kuomintang regime. The next step is to carry out the socialist revolution, which will follow on the development of this struggle. The fulfilment of this great revolutionary task is no simple or easy job and will depend entirely on correct and firm tactics on the part of the proletarian party. If its tactics of struggle are wrong, or irresolute and wavering, the revolution will certainly suffer temporary defeat. It must be borne in mind that the bourgeois parties, too, constantly discuss their tactics of struggle. They are considering how to spread reformist influences among the working class so as to mislead it and turn it. away from Communist Party leadership, how to get the rich peasants to put down the uprisings of the poor peasants and how to organize gangsters to suppress the revolutionary struggles. In a situation when the class struggle grows increasingly acute and is waged at close quarters, the proletariat has to depend for its victory entirely on the correct and firm tactics of struggle of its own party, the Communist Party. A Communist Party's correct and unswerving tactics of struggle can in no circumstance be created by a few people sitting in an office; they emerge in the course of mass struggle, that is, through actual experience. Therefore, we must at all times study social conditions and make practical investigations. Those comrades who are inflexible, conservative, formalistic and groundlessly optimistic think that the present tactics of struggle are perfect, that the "book of documents" [5] of the Party's Sixth National Congress guarantees lasting victory, and that one can always be victorious merely by adhering to the established methods. These ideas are absolutely wrong and have nothing in common with the idea that Communists should create favorable new situations through struggle; they represent a purely conservative line. Unless it is completely discarded, this line will cause

great losses to the revolution and do harm to these comrades themselves. There are obviously some comrades in our Red Army who are content to leave things as they are, who do not seek to understand anything thoroughly and are groundlessly optimistic, and they spread the fallacy that "this is proletarian". They eat their fill and sit dozing in their offices all day long without ever moving a step and going out among the masses to investigate. Whenever they open their mouths, their platitudes make people sick. To awaken these comrades, we must raise our voices and cry out to them:

Change your conservative ideas without delay!

Replace them by progressive and militant Communist ideas!

Get into the struggle!

Go among the masses and investigate the facts!

VII. The Technique of Investigation

1. Hold fact-finding meetings and undertake investigation through discussions.

This is the only way to get near the truth, the only way to draw conclusions. It is easy to commit mistakes if you do not hold fact-finding meetings for investigation through discussions but simply rely on one individual relating his own experience. You cannot possibly draw more or less correct conclusions at such meetings if you put questions casually instead of raising key-questions for discussion.

2. What kind of people should attend the fact-finding meetings?

They should be people well acquainted with social and economic conditions. As far as age is concerned, older people are best, because they are rich in experience and not only know what is going an but understand the causes and effects. Young people with experience of struggle should also be included, because they have progressive ideas and sharp eyes. As far as occupation is concerned, there should be workers, peasants, merchants, intellectuals, and occasionally soldiers, and sometimes even vagrants. Naturally, when a particular subject is being looked into, those who have nothing to do with it need not be present. For example, workers, peasants and students need not attend when commerce is the subject of investigation.

3. Which is better, a large fact-finding meeting or a small one?

That depends on the investigator's ability to conduct a meeting. If he is good at it, a meeting of as many as a dozen or even twenty or more people can be called. A large meeting has its advantages; from the answers you get fairly accurate statistics (e. g., in finding out the percentage of poor peasants in the total peasant population) and fairly correct conclusions (e.g., in finding out whether equal or differentiated land redistribution is better). Of course, it has its disadvantages too; unless you are skillful in conducting meetings, you will find it difficult to keep order. So, the number of. people attending a meeting depends on the competence of the investigator. However, the minimum is three, or otherwise the information obtained will be too limited to correspond to the real situation.

4. Prepare a detailed outline for the investigation.

A detailed outline' should be prepared beforehand, and the investigator should ask questions according to the outline, with those present at the meeting giving their answers. Any points which are unclear or doubtful should be put up for discussion. The detailed outline should include main subjects and sub-headings and also detailed items. For instance, taking commerce as a main subject, it can have such sub-headings as cloth, grain,

other necessities and medicinal herbs; again, under cloth, there can be such detailed items as calico, homespun and silk and satin.

5. Personal participation.

Everyone with responsibility for giving leadership — from the chairman of the township government to the chairman of the central government, from the detachment leader to the commander-in-chief, from the secretary of a Party branch to the general secretary — must personally undertake investigation into the specific social and economic conditions and not merely rely on reading reports. For investigation and reading reports are two entirely different things.

6. Probe deeply.

Anyone new to investigation work should make one or two thorough investigations in order to gain full knowledge of a particular place (say, a village or a town) of a particular problem (say, the problem of grain or currency). Deep probing into a particular place or problem will make future investigation of other places or problems easier.

7. Make your own notes.

The investigator should not only preside at fact-finding meetings and give proper guidance to those present but should also make his own notes and record the results himself. To have others do it for him is no good.

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[1] See Confucian Analects, Book III, "Pa Yi": "When Confucius entered the Ancestral Temple he inquired into everything."

[2] Li Kuei was a hero in the well-known Chinese novel shui Hu Chuan' (Heroes of the Marshes) which describes the peasant war that occurred towards the end of the Northern Sung Dynasty (960-1127). He was simple, outspoken and very loyal to the revolutionary cause of the peasants, but crude and tactless.

[3] Comrade Mao Tse-tung has always laid great stress on investigation, regarding social investigation as the most important task and the basis for defining policy in the work of leadership. The work of investigation was gradually developed in the Fourth Army of the Red Army on Comrade Mao Tsetung's initiative. He stipulated that social investigation should be a regular part of the work, and the Political Department of the Red Army prepared detailed forms covering such items as the state of the mass struggle, the condition of the reactionaries, the economic life of the people and the amount of land owned by each class in the rural areas. Wherever the Red Army went, it first made itself familiar with the class situation in the locality and then formulated slogans suited to the needs of the masses.

[4] Here 'the mountains' are the Chingkang mountain area along the borders of Kiangsi and Hunan Provinces; the 'plains' are those in southern Kiangsi and western Fukien. In January 1929, comrade Mao Tse-tung led the main force of the Fourth Army of the Red Army down from the Chingkang Mountains to southern Kiangsi and western Fukien in order to set up two large revolutionary base areas.

[5] The "Book of documents" consisted of the resolutions adopted at the Sixth National Congress of the Communist Party of China in July 1928, including the political resolution and the resolutions on the peasant question, the land question, the organization of political power, etc. Early in 1929 the Front Committee of the Fourth Army of the Red Army published these resolutions in book form for distribution to the Party organizations in the Red Army and to the local Party organizations.

On the Reissue of the Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention

n the General HQ of the Chinese PLA, 1947

Army's Three Main Rules of Discipline and Eight Points for Attention have l
ticed for many years, but their contents vary slightly in army units in different a
y have now been unified and are hereby reissued. It is expected that you will take
ion as the standard one for thorough education and strict enforcement. As to c
ers needing attention, the high command of the armed forces in different areas may
n additional points in accordance with specific conditions and order their enforcem

Three Main Rules of Discipline are as follows:
Obey orders in all your actions
Don't take a single needle or piece of thread from the masses
Turn in everything captured

Eight Points for Attention are as follows:
Speak politely
Pay fairly for what you buy
Return everything you borrow
Pay for anything you damage
Don't hit or swear at people
Don't damage crops
Don't take liberties with women
Don't ill-treat captive

n ***6. The Political Problems Of Guerrilla Warfare***
y people think it impossible for guerrillas to exist for long in the enemy's rear. Su
f reveals a lack of comprehension of the relationship that should exist between
le and the troops. The former may be likened to water the latter to the fish who inh
ow may it be said that these two cannot exist together? It is only undisciplined tr
make the people their enemies and who, like the fish out of its native element, ca

further our mission of destroying the enemy by propagandizing his troops, by trea
captured soldiers with consideration, and by caring for those of his wounded who
our hands. If we fail in these respects, we strengthen the solidarity of our enemy.

In Memory of Norman Bethune

by Mao Zedong, 1939

Comrade Norman Bethune, [1] a member of the Communist Party of Canada, was around fifty when he was sent by the Communist Parties of Canada and the United States to China; he made light of travelling thousands of miles to help us in our War of Resistance Against Japan. He arrived in Yenan in the spring of last year, went to work in the Wutai Mountains, and to our great sorrow died a martyr at his post. What kind of spirit is this that makes a foreigner selflessly adopt the cause of the Chinese people's liberation as his own? It is the spirit of internationalism, the spirit of communism, from which every Chinese Communist must learn. Leninism teaches that the world revolution can only succeed if the proletariat of the capitalist countries supports the struggle for liberation of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples and if the proletariat of the colonies and semi-colonies supports that of the proletariat of the capitalist countries. [2] Comrade Bethune put this Leninist line into practice. We Chinese Communists must also follow this line in our practice. We must unite with the proletariat of all the capitalist countries, with the proletariat of Japan, Britain, the United States, Germany, Italy and all other capitalist countries, for this is the only way to overthrow imperialism, to liberate our nation and people and to liberate the other nations and peoples of the world. This is our internationalism, the internationalism with which we oppose both narrow nationalism and narrow patriotism.

Comrade Bethune's spirit, his utter devotion to others without any thought of self, was shown in his great sense of responsibility in his work and his great warm-heartedness towards all comrades and the people. Every Communist must learn from him. There are not a few people who are irresponsible in their work, preferring the light and shirking the heavy, passing the burdensome tasks on to others and choosing the easy ones for themselves. At every turn they think of themselves before others. When they make some small contribution, they swell with pride and brag about it for fear that others will not know. They feel no warmth towards comrades

and the people but are cold, indifferent and apathetic. In truth such people are not Communists, or at least cannot be counted as devoted Communists. No one who returned from the front failed to express admiration for Bethune whenever his name was mentioned, and none remained unmoved by his spirit. In the Shansi-Chahar-Hopei border area, no soldier or civilian was unmoved who had been treated by Dr. Bethune or had seen how he worked. Every Communist must learn this true communist spirit from Comrade Bethune.

Comrade Bethune was a doctor, the art of healing was his profession and he was constantly perfecting his skill, which stood very high in the Eighth Route Army's medical service. His example is an excellent lesson for those people who wish to change their work the moment they see something different and for those who despise technical work as of no consequence or as promising no future.

Comrade Bethune and I met only once. Afterwards he wrote me many letters. But I was busy, and I wrote him only one letter and do not even know if he ever received it. I am deeply grieved over his death. Now we are all commemorating him, which shows how profoundly his spirit inspires everyone. We must all learn the spirit of absolute selflessness from him. With this spirit everyone can be very useful to the people. A man's ability may be great or small, but if he has this spirit, he is already noble-minded and pure, a man of moral integrity and above vulgar interests, a man who is of value to the people.

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[1] The distinguished surgeon Norman Bethune was a member of the Canadian Communist Party. In 1936 when the German and Italian fascist bandits invaded Spain, he went to the front and worked for the anti-fascist Spanish people. In order to help the Chinese people in their War of Resistance Against Japan, he came to China at the head of a medical team and arrived in Yenan in the spring of 1938. Soon after he went to the Shansi-Chahar-Hopei border area. Imbued with ardent internationalism and the great communist spirit, he served the army and the people of the Liberated Areas for nearly two years. He contracted blood poisoning while operating on wounded soldiers and died in Tanghsien, Hopei, on November 12, 1939

[2] See J. V. Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism", Problems of Leninism, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1954, pp. 70-79.

Freedom to Criticise and Unity of Action

by V. I. Lenin, 1906

Introduction

On May 11(24), 1906, 300 R.S.D.L.P. (Russian Social Democratic Labor Party) members of the Moskovsky district in St. Petersburg held a meeting to discuss the results of the Unity Congress. The reports were made by Lenin (no record of his report has been preserved) and the Menshevik Dan. Towards the close of the meeting a controversy broke out between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks over whether it was permissible to criticize decisions of the Unity Congress in the press and at public meetings. The Mensheviks, who were doing their utmost to limit the ideological struggle over the Congress decisions, considered criticism permissible only at Party meetings, and proposed a resolution to that effect. Lenin moved an amendment saying that all the Congress decisions should be discussed not only at Party meetings, but also in the Social-Democratic press and at public meetings. The resolution, including Lenin's amendment, was carried against 39 votes (*Volna* , No. 15, May 12, 1906). In reply to Lenin's amendment the Central Committee, most of whose members were Mensheviks, adopted the resolution which Lenin criticizes in his article.

The editors have received the following communication, signed by the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.

"In view of the fact that several Party organizations have raised the question *of the limits within which the decisions of Party congresses may be criticized* , the Central Committee, bearing in mind that the interests of the Russian proletariat have always demanded the greatest possible unity in the tactics of the R.S.D.L.P., and that *this unity in the political activities* of the various sections of our Party is now more necessary than ever, is of the opinion:

(1) that in the Party press and at Party meetings, everybody must be allowed *full freedom* to express his personal opinions and to advocate his individual views;

(2) that at public political meetings members of the Party should refrain from conducting *agitation* that runs counter to congress decisions;

(3) that no Party member should at *such* meetings *call for action that runs counter to congress decisions* , or propose resolutions that are out of harmony with congress decisions." (All italics ours.)

In examining the substance of this resolution, we see a number of queer points. The resolution says that "at Party meetings" "full freedom" is to be allowed for the expression of personal opinions and for criticism (§ 1), but at "public meetings" (§ 2) "no Party member should call for action that runs counter to congress decisions". But see what comes of this: at Party meetings, members of the Party *have the right* to call for action that runs counter to congress decisions; but at public meetings they are *not* "allowed" full freedom to "express personal opinions"!!

Those who drafted the resolution have a totally wrong conception of the relationship between *freedom to criticize* within the Party and the Party's *unity of action* . Criticism within the limits of the *principles* of the Party Programme must be quite free (we remind the reader of what Plekhanov said on this subject at the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.), not only at Party meetings, but also at public meetings. Such criticism, or such "agitation" (for criticism is inseparable from agitation) cannot be prohibited. The Party's political action must be united. No "calls" that violate the unity of definite actions can be tolerated either at public meetings, or at Party meetings, or in the Party press.

Obviously, the Central Committee has defined freedom to criticize inaccurately and too narrowly, and unity of action inaccurately and too broadly.

Let us take an example. The Congress decided that the Party should take part in the Duma elections. Taking part in elections is a very definite action. During the elections (as in Baku today, for example), no member of the Party *anywhere* has any right whatever to call upon the people to *abstain*

from voting ; nor can “criticism” of the decision to take part in the elections be tolerated during this period, for it would in fact jeopardize success in the election campaign. *Before* elections have been announced, however, Party members *everywhere* have a perfect right to *criticize* the decision to take part in elections. Of course, the application of this principle in practice will sometimes give rise to disputes and misunderstandings; but *only* on the basis of *this* principle can *all* disputes and all misunderstandings be settled honorably for the Party. The resolution of the Central Committee, however, creates an impossible situation.

The Central Committee’s resolution is essentially wrong and *runs counter to the Party Rules* . The principle of democratic centralism and autonomy for local Party organizations implies universal and full *freedom to criticize* , so long as this does not disturb the unity of a *definite action* ; it rules out *all* criticism which disrupts or makes difficult the *unity* of an action decided on by the Party.

We think that the Central Committee has made a big mistake by publishing a resolution on this important question without first having it discussed in the Party press and by Party organizations; such a discussion would have helped it to avoid the mistakes we have indicated.

We call upon all Party organizations to discuss this resolution of the Central Committee now, and to express a definite opinion on it.

Twelve Recommendations

by Ho Chi Minh, 1948

The nation has its root in the people.

In the Resistance war and national reconstruction, the main force lies in the people. Therefore, all the people in the army, administration and mass organizations who are in contact or live with the people, must remember and carry out the following twelve recommendations:

Six forbiddances:

1. Not to do what is likely to damage the land and crops or spoil the houses and belongings of the people.

2. Not to insist on buying or borrowing what the people are not willing to sell or lend.

3. Not to bring living hens into mountainous people's houses. [1]

4. Never break our word.

5. Not to offend people's faith and customs (such as to lie down before the altar, to raise feet over the hearth, to play music in the house, etc.).

6. Not to do or speak what is likely to make people believe that we hold them in contempt.

Six permissibles:

1. To help the people in their daily work (harvesting, fetching fire-wood, carrying water, sewing, etc.).

2. Whenever possible, buy commodities for those who live far from markets (knife, salt, needle, thread, pen, paper, etc.).

3. In spare time, to tell amusing simple and short stories useful to the Resistance, but not betraying secrets.

4. To teach the population the national script and elementary hygiene.

5. To study the customs of each region so as to be acquainted with them in order to create an atmosphere of sympathy first, then gradually to explain to the people to abate their superstitions.

6. To show to the people that you are correct, diligent and disciplined.

Stimulating poem

The above-mentioned twelve recommendations
Are feasible to all
He who loves his country,
Will never forget them.
When the people have a habit,
All are like one man,
With good armymen and good people,
Everything will be crowned with success.
Only when the root is firm, can the tree live long
And victory is built with the people as foundation.

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[1] Respecting a taboo of the mountain people; There was also a chicken plague spreading at the time. *Translations on North Vietnam* , Vol. 20, 1971, p. 47.

The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains

by Mao Zedong, 1945

We have had a very successful congress. We have done three things. First, we have decided on the line of our Party, which is boldly to mobilize the masses and expand the people's forces so that, under the leadership of our Party, they will defeat the Japanese aggressors, liberate the whole people and build a new-democratic China. Second, we have adapted the new Party Constitution. Third, we have elected the leading body of the Party--the Central Committee. Henceforth our task is to lead the whole membership in carrying out the Party line. Ours has been a congress of victory, a congress of unity. The delegates have made excellent comments on the three reports. Many comrades have undertaken self-criticism; with unity as the objective unity has been achieved through self-criticism. This congress is a model of unity, of self-criticism and of inner-Party democracy.

When the congress closes, many comrades will be leaving for their posts and the various war fronts. Comrades, wherever you go, you should propagate the line of the congress and, through the members of the Party, explain it to the broad masses.

Our aim in propagating the line of the congress is to build up the confidence of the whole Party and the entire people in the certain triumph of the revolution. We must first raise the political consciousness of the vanguard so that, resolute and unafraid of sacrifice, they will surmount every difficulty to win victory. But this is not enough; we must also arouse the political consciousness of the entire people so that they may willingly and gladly fight together with us for victory. We should fire the whole people with the conviction that China belongs not to the reactionaries but to the Chinese people. There is an ancient Chinese fable called "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains". It tells of an old man who lived in northern China long, long ago and was known as the Foolish Old Man of North Mountain. His house faced south and beyond his doorway stood the

two great peaks, Taihang and Wangwu, obstructing the way. He called his sons, and hoe in hand they began to dig up these mountains with great determination. Another graybeard, known as the Wise Old Man, saw them and said derisively, "How silly of you to do this! It is quite impossible for you few to dig up those two huge mountains." The Foolish Old Man replied, "When I die, my sons will carry on; when they die, there will be my grandsons, and then their sons and grandsons, and so on to infinity. High as they are, the mountains cannot grow any higher and with every bit we dig, they will be that much lower. Why can't we clear them away?" Having refuted the Wise Old Man's wrong view, he went on digging every day, unshaken in his conviction. God was moved by this, and he sent down two angels, who carried the mountains away on their backs. Today, two big mountains lie like a dead weight on the Chinese people. One is imperialism, the other is feudalism. The Chinese Communist Party has long made up its mind to dig them up. We must persevere and work unceasingly, and we, too, will touch God's heart. Our God is none other than the masses of the Chinese people. If they stand up and dig together with us, why can't these two mountains be cleared away?

Yesterday, in a talk with two Americans who were leaving for the United States, I said that the U.S. government was trying to undermine us and this would not be permitted. We oppose the U.S. government's policy of supporting Chiang Kai-shek against the Communists. But we must draw a distinction, firstly, between the people of the United States and their government and, secondly, within the U.S. government between the policy-makers and their subordinates. I said to these two Americans, "Tell the policy-makers in your government that we forbid you Americans to enter the Liberated Areas because your policy is to support Chiang Kai-shek against the Communists, and we have to be on our guard. You can come to the Liberated Areas if your purpose is to fight Japan, but there must first be an agreement. We will not permit you to nose around everywhere. Since Patrick J. Hurley [1] has publicly declared against co-operation with the Chinese Communist Party, why do you still want to come and prowl around in our Liberated Areas?"

The U.S. government's policy of supporting Chiang Kai-shek against the Communists shows the brazenness of the U.S. reactionaries. But all the scheming of the reactionaries, whether Chinese or foreign, to prevent the Chinese people from achieving victory is doomed to failure. The democratic forces are the main current in the world today, while reaction is only a counter-current. The reactionary countercurrent is trying to swamp the main current of national independence and people's democracy, but it can never become the main current. Today, there are still three major contradictions in the old world, as Stalin pointed out long ago: first, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the imperialist countries; second, the contradiction between the various imperialist powers, and third, the contradiction between the colonial and semi-colonial countries and the imperialist metropolitan countries. [2] Not only do these three contradictions continue to exist but they are becoming more acute and widespread. Because of their existence and growth, the time will come when the reactionary anti-Soviet, anti-Communist and anti-democratic counter-current still in existence today will be swept away.

At this moment two congresses are being held in China, the Sixth National Congress of the Kuomintang and the Seventh National Congress of the Communist Party. They have completely different aims: the aim of one is to liquidate the Communist Party and all the other democratic forces in China and thus to plunge China into darkness; the aim of the other is to overthrow Japanese imperialism and its lackeys, the Chinese feudal forces, and build a new-democratic China and thus to lead China to light. Those two lines are in conflict with each other. We firmly believe that, led by the Chinese Communist Party and guided by the line of its Seventh Congress, the Chinese people will achieve complete victory, while the Kuomintang's counter-revolutionary line will inevitably fail.

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[1] Patrick J. Hurley, a reactionary Republican Party politician, was appointed U.S. ambassador to China towards the end of 1944. In November 1945 he was forced to resign because his support for Chiang Kai-shek's anti-Communist policy roused the firm opposition of the Chinese people. Harley's open declaration against cooperation with the Chinese Communist Party was made on April 2, 1945

at a U.S. State Department press conference in Washington. For details, see "The Hurley-Chiang Duet Is a Flop", pp. 281-84 of this volume.

[2] See J. V. Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism", Works, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1953, Vol. VI, pp. 74-82.

Serve the People

by Mao Zedong, 1944

Our Communist Party and the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies led by our Party are battalions of the revolution. These battalions of ours are wholly dedicated to the liberation of the people and work entirely in the people's interests. Comrade Chang Szu-teh [1] was in the ranks of these battalions.

All men must die, but death can vary in its significance. The ancient Chinese writer Szuma Chien said, "Though death befalls all men alike, it may be weightier than Mount Tai or lighter than a feather." [2] To die for the people is weightier than Mount Tai, but to work for the fascists and die for the exploiters and oppressors is lighter than a feather. Comrade Chang Szu-teh died for the people, and his death is indeed weightier than Mount Tai.

If we have shortcomings, we are not afraid to have them pointed out and criticized, because we serve the people. Anyone, no matter who, may point out our shortcomings. If he is right, we will correct them. If what he proposes will benefit the people, we will act upon it. The idea of "better troops and simpler administration" was put forward by Mr. Li Ting-ming, [3] who is not a Communist. He made a good suggestion which is of benefit to the people, and we have adopted it. If, in the interests of the people, we persist in doing what is right and correct what is wrong, our ranks will surely thrive.

We hail from all corners of the country and have joined together for a common revolutionary objective. And we need the vast majority of the people with us on the road to this objective. Today, we already lead base areas with a population of 91 million, [4] but this is not enough; to liberate the whole nation more are needed. In times of difficulty, we must not lose sight of our achievements, must see the bright future and must pluck up our

courage. The Chinese people are suffering; it is our duty to save them and we must exert ourselves in struggle. Wherever there is struggle there is sacrifice, and death is a common occurrence. But we have the interests of the people and the sufferings of the great majority at heart, and when we die for the people, it is a worthy death. Nevertheless, we should do our best to avoid unnecessary sacrifices. Our cadres must show concern for every soldier, and all people in the revolutionary ranks must care for each other, must love and help each other.

From now on, when anyone in our ranks who has done some useful work dies, be he soldier or cook, we should have a funeral ceremony and a memorial meeting in his honor. This should become the rule. And it should be introduced among the people as well. When someone dies in a village, let a memorial meeting be held. In this way we express our mourning for the dead and unite all the people.

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[1] Comrade Chang Szu-teh was a soldier in the Guards Regiment of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. A member of Communist Party who loyally served the interests of the people, he joined the revolution in 1933, took part in the Long March and was wounded in service. On September 5, 1944, when making charcoal in the mountains of Ansai County, northern Shensi, he was killed by the sudden collapse of a kiln.

[2] Szuma Chien, the famous Chinese historian of the 2nd century B.C., was the author of the Historical Records. The quotation comes from his "Reply to Jen Shao-ching's Letter".

[3] Li Ting-ming, an enlightened landlord of northern Shensi Province, was at one time elected Vice-Chairman of the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region Government.

[4] This was the total population of the Shensi-Kansu-Ningela Border Region and all other Liberated Areas in northern, central and southern China.

Marxism and the National Question

by Josef Stalin, 1913

Introduction

The period of counter-revolution in Russia brought not only "thunder and lightning" in its train, but also disillusionment in the movement and lack of faith in common forces. As long as people believed in "a bright future," they fought side by side irrespective of nationality – common questions first and foremost! But when doubt crept into people's hearts, they began to depart, each to his own national tent – let every man count only upon himself! The "national question" first and foremost!

At the same time a profound upheaval was taking place in the economic life of the country. The year 1905 had not been in vain: one more blow had been struck at the survivals of serfdom in the countryside. The series of good harvests which succeeded the famine years, and the industrial boom which followed, furthered the progress of capitalism. Class differentiation in the countryside, the growth of the towns, the development of trade and means of communication all took a big stride forward. This applied particularly to the border regions. And it could not but hasten the process of economic consolidation of the nationalities of Russia. They were bound to be stirred into movement.

The "constitutional regime" established at that time also acted in the same direction of awakening the nationalities. The spread of newspapers and of literature generally, a certain freedom of the press and cultural institutions, an increase in the number of national theatres, and so forth, all unquestionably helped to strengthen "national sentiments." The Duma, with its election campaign and political groups, gave fresh opportunities for greater activity of the nations and provided a new and wide arena for their mobilization.

And the mounting wave of militant nationalism above and the series of repressive measures taken by the "powers that be" in vengeance on the border regions for their "love of freedom," evoked an answering wave of nationalism below, which at times took the form of crude chauvinism. The spread of Zionism [1] among the Jews, the increase of chauvinism in Poland, Pan-Islamism among the Tatars, the spread of nationalism among the Armenians, Georgians and Ukrainians, the general swing of the philistine towards anti-Semitism – all these are generally known facts.

The wave of nationalism swept onwards with increasing force, threatening to engulf the mass of the workers. And the more the movement for emancipation declined, the more plentifully nationalism pushed forth its blossoms.

At this difficult time Social-Democracy had a high mission – to resist nationalism and to protect the masses from the general "epidemic." For Social-Democracy, and Social-Democracy alone, could do this, by countering nationalism with the tried weapon of internationalism, with the unity and indivisibility of the class struggle. And the more powerfully the wave of nationalism advanced, the louder had to be the call of Social-Democracy for fraternity and unity among the proletarians of all the nationalities of Russia. And in this connection particular firmness was demanded of the Social-Democrats of the border regions, who came into direct contact with the nationalist movement.

But not all Social-Democrats proved equal to the task – and this applies particularly to the Social-Democrats of the border regions. The Bund, which had previously laid stress on the common tasks, now began to give prominence to its own specific, purely nationalist aims: it went to the length of declaring "observance of the Sabbath" and "recognition of Yiddish" a fighting issue in its election campaign. [2] The Bund was followed by the Caucasus; one section of the Caucasian Social-Democrats, which, like the rest of the Caucasian Social-Democrats, had formerly rejected "cultural-national autonomy," are now making it an immediate demand. [3] This is

without mentioning the conference of the Liquidators, which in a diplomatic way gave its sanction to nationalist vacillations. [4]

But from this it follows that the views of Russian Social-Democracy on the national question are not yet clear to all Social-Democrats.

It is evident that a serious and comprehensive discussion of the national question is required. Consistent Social-Democrats must work solidly and indefatigably against the fog of nationalism, no matter from what quarter it proceeds.

Chapter 1: The Nation

What is a nation?

A nation is primarily a community, a definite community of people.

This community is not racial, nor is it tribal. The modern Italian nation was formed from Romans, Teutons, Etruscans, Greeks, Arabs, and so forth. The French nation was formed from Gauls, Romans, Britons, Teutons, and so on. The same must be said of the British, the Germans and others, who were formed into nations from people of diverse races and tribes.

Thus, a nation is not a racial or tribal, but a historically constituted community of people.

On the other hand, it is unquestionable that the great empires of Cyrus and Alexander could not be called nations, although they came to be constituted historically and were formed out of different tribes and races. They were not nations, but casual and loosely-connected conglomerations of groups, which fell apart or joined together according to the victories or defeats of this or that conqueror.

Thus, a nation is not a casual or ephemeral conglomeration, but a stable community of people.

But not every stable community constitutes a nation. Austria and Russia are also stable communities, but nobody calls them nations. What distinguishes a national community from a state community? The fact, among others, that a national community is inconceivable without a common language, while a state need not have a common language. The Czech nation in Austria and the Polish in Russia would be impossible if each did not have a common

language, whereas the integrity of Russia and Austria is not affected by the fact that there are a number of different languages within their borders. We are referring, of course, to the spoken languages of the people and not to the official governmental languages.

Thus, *a common language* is one of the characteristic features of a nation.

This, of course, does not mean that different nations always and everywhere speak different languages, or that all who speak one language necessarily constitute one nation. A *common* language for every nation, but not necessarily different languages for different nations! There is no nation which at one and the same time speaks several languages, but this does not mean that there cannot be two nations speaking the same language! Englishmen and Americans speak one language, but they do not constitute one nation. The same is true of the Norwegians and the Danes, the English and the Irish.

But why, for instance, do the English and the Americans not constitute one nation in spite of their common language?

Firstly, because they do not live together, but inhabit different territories. A nation is formed only as a result of lengthy and systematic intercourse, as a result of people living together generation after generation.

But people cannot live together, for lengthy periods unless they have a common territory. Englishmen and Americans originally inhabited the same territory, England, and constituted one nation. Later, one section of the English emigrated from England to a new territory, America, and there, in the new territory, in the course of time, came to form the new American nation. Difference of. territory led to the formation of different nations.

Thus, *a common territory* is one of the characteristic features of a nation.

But this is not all. Common territory does not by itself create a nation. This requires, in addition, an internal economic bond to weld the various parts of the nation into a single whole. There is no such bond between England and America, and so they constitute two different nations. But the Americans themselves would not deserve to be called a nation were not the different parts of America bound together into an economic whole, as a result of division of labor between them, the development of means of communication, and so forth.

Take the Georgians, for instance. The Georgians before the Reform inhabited a common territory and spoke one language. Nevertheless, they did not, strictly speaking, constitute one nation, for, being split up into a number of disconnected principalities, they could not share a common economic life; for centuries they waged war against each other and pillaged each other, each inciting the Persians and Turks against the other. The ephemeral and casual union of the principalities which some successful king sometimes managed to bring about embraced at best a superficial administrative sphere, and rapidly disintegrated owing to the caprices of the princes and the indifference of the peasants. Nor could it be otherwise in economically disunited Georgia ... Georgia came on the scene as a nation only in the latter half of the nineteenth century, when the fall of serfdom and the growth of the economic life of the country, the development of means of communication and the rise of capitalism, introduced division of labor between the various districts of Georgia, completely shattered the economic isolation of the principalities and bound them together into a single whole.

The same must be said of the other nations which have passed through the stage of feudalism and have developed capitalism.

Thus, *a common economic life, economic cohesion, is* one of the characteristic features of a nation.

But even this is not all. Apart from the foregoing, one must take into consideration the specific spiritual complexion of the people constituting a

nation. Nations differ not only in their conditions of life, but also in spiritual complexion, which manifests itself in peculiarities of national culture. If England, America and Ireland, which speak one language, nevertheless constitute three distinct nations, it is in no small measure due to the peculiar psychological make-up which they developed from generation to generation as a result of dissimilar conditions of existence.

Of course, by itself, psychological make-up or, as it is otherwise called, "national character," is something intangible for the observer, but in so far as it manifests itself in a distinctive culture common to the nation it is something tangible and cannot be ignored.

Needless to say, "national character" is not a thing that is fixed once and for all, but is modified by changes in the conditions of life; but since it exists at every given moment, it leaves its impress on the physiognomy of the nation.

Thus, *a common psychological make-up* , which manifests itself in a common culture, is one of the characteristic features of a nation.

We have now exhausted the characteristic features of a nation.

A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.

It goes without saying that a nation, like every historical phenomenon, is subject to the law of change, has its history, its beginning and end.

It must be emphasized that none of the above characteristics taken separately is sufficient to define a nation. More than that, it is sufficient for a single one of these characteristics to be lacking and the nation ceases to be a nation.

It is possible to conceive of people possessing a common "national character" who, nevertheless, cannot be said to constitute a single nation if they are economically disunited, inhabit different territories, speak different languages, and so forth. Such, for instance, are the Russian, Galician, American, Georgian and Caucasian Highland *Jews* , who, in our opinion, do not constitute a single nation.

It is possible to conceive of people with a common territory and economic life who nevertheless would not constitute a single nation because they have no common language and no common "national character." Such, for instance, are the Germans and Letts in the Baltic region.

Finally, the Norwegians and the Danes speak one language, but they do not constitute a single nation owing to the absence of the other characteristics.

It is only when all these characteristics are present together that we have a nation.

It might appear that "national character" is not one of the characteristics but the *sole* essential characteristic of a nation, and that all the other characteristics are, properly speaking, only *conditions* for the development of a nation, rather than its characteristics. Such, for instance, is the view held by R. Springer, and more particularly by O. Bauer, who are Social-Democratic theoreticians on the national question well known in Austria.

Let us examine their theory of the nation.

According to Springer, "a nation is a union of similarly thinking and similarly speaking persons." It is "a cultural community of modern people *no longer tied to the 'soil.'"* [5] (our italics).

Thus, a "union" of similarly thinking and similarly speaking people, no matter how disconnected they may be, no matter where they live, is a

nation.

Bauer goes even further.

"What is a nation?" he asks. "Is it a common language which makes people a nation? But the English and the Irish ... speak the same language without, however, being one people; the Jews have no common language and yet are a nation." [6]

What, then, is a nation?

"A nation is a relative community of character."

But what is character, in this case national character?

National character is "the sum total of characteristics which distinguish the people of one nationality from the people of another nationality – the complex of physical and spiritual characteristics which distinguish one nation from another."

Bauer knows, of course, that national character does not drop from the skies, and he therefore adds:

"The character of people is determined by nothing so much as by their destiny.... A nation is nothing but a community with a common destiny" which, in turn, is determined "by the conditions under which people produce their means of subsistence and distribute the products of their labor."

We thus arrive at the most "complete," as Bauer calls it, definition of a nation:

"A nation is an aggregate of people bound into a community of character by a common destiny."

We thus have common national character based on a common destiny, but not necessarily connected with a common territory, language or economic life.

But what in that case remains of the nation? What common nationality can there be among people who are economically disconnected, inhabit different territories and from generation to generation speak different languages?

Bauer speaks of the Jews as a nation, although they "have no common language"; but what "common destiny" and national cohesion is there, for instance, between the Georgian, Daghestanian, Russian and American Jews, who are completely separated from one another, inhabit different territories and speak different languages?

The above-mentioned Jews undoubtedly lead their economic and political life in common with the Georgians, Daghestanians, Russians and Americans respectively, and they live in the same cultural atmosphere as these; this is bound to leave a definite impress on their national character; if there is anything common to them left, it is their religion, their common origin and certain relics of the national character. All this is beyond question. But how can it be seriously maintained that petrified religious rites and fading psychological relics affect the "destiny" of these Jews more powerfully than the living social, economic and cultural environment that surrounds them? And it is only on this assumption that it is possible to speak of the Jews as a single nation at all.

What, then, distinguishes Bauer's nation from the mystical and self-sufficient "national spirit" of the spiritualists?

Bauer sets up an impassable barrier between the "distinctive feature" of nations (national character) and the "conditions" of their life, divorcing the one from the other. But what is national character if not a reflection of the conditions of life, a coagulation of impressions derived from environment? How can one limit the matter to national character alone, isolating and divorcing it from the soil that gave rise to it?

Further, what indeed distinguished the English nation from the American nation at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, when America was still known as New England? Not national character, of course; for the Americans had originated from England and had brought with them to America not only the English language, but also the English national character, which, of course, they could not lose so soon; although, under the influence of the new conditions, they would naturally be developing their own specific character. Yet, despite their more or less common character, they at that time already constituted a nation distinct from England! Obviously, New England as a nation differed then from England as a nation not by its specific national character, or not so much by its national character, as by its environment and conditions of life, which were distinct from those of England.

It is therefore clear that there is in fact no *single* distinguishing characteristic of a nation. There is only a sum total of characteristics, of which, when nations are compared, sometimes one characteristic (national character), sometimes another (language), or sometimes a third (territory, economic conditions), stands out in sharper relief. A nation constitutes the combination of all these characteristics taken together.

Bauer's point of view, which identifies a nation with its national character, divorces the nation from its soil and converts it into an invisible, self-contained force. The result is not a living and active nation, but something mystical, intangible and supernatural. For, I repeat, what sort of nation, for instance, is a Jewish nation which consists of Georgian, Daghestanian, Russian, American and other Jews, the members of which do not understand each other (since they speak different languages), inhabit

different parts of the globe, will never see each other, and will never act together, whether in time of peace or in time of war?!

No, it is not for such paper "nations" that Social-Democracy draws up its national program. It can reckon only with real nations, which act and move, and therefore insist on being reckoned with.

Bauer is obviously confusing *nation* , which is a historical category, with *tribe* , which is an ethnographical category.

However, Bauer himself apparently feels the weakness of his position. While in the beginning of his book he definitely declares the Jews to be a nation, he corrects himself at the end of the book and states that "in general capitalist society makes it impossible for them (the Jews) to continue as a nation," by causing them to assimilate with other nations. The reason, it appears, is that "the Jews have no closed territory of settlement," whereas the Czechs, for instance, have such a territory and, according to Bauer, will survive as a nation. In short, the reason lies in the absence of a territory.

By arguing thus, Bauer wanted to prove that the Jewish workers cannot demand national autonomy, but he thereby inadvertently refuted his own theory, which denies that a common territory is one of the characteristics of a nation.

But Bauer goes further. In the beginning of his book, he definitely declares that "the Jews have no *common* language, and yet are a nation." But hardly has he reached p. 130 than he effects a change of front and just as definitely declares that *"unquestionably, no nation is possible without a common language"* (our italics).

Bauer wanted to prove that "language is the most important instrument of human intercourse," but at the same time he inadvertently proved something he did not mean to prove, namely, the unsoundness of his own theory of nations, which denies the significance of a common language.

Thus, this theory, stitched together by idealistic threads, refutes itself.

Chapter 2: The National Movement

A nation is not merely a historical category but a historical category belonging to a definite epoch, the epoch of rising capitalism. The process of elimination of feudalism and development of capitalism is at the same time a process of the constitution of people into nations. Such, for instance, was the case in Western Europe. The British, French, Germans, Italians and others were formed into nations at the time of the victorious advance of capitalism and its triumph over feudal disunity.

But the formation of nations in those instances at the same time signified their conversion into independent national states. The British, French and other nations are at the same time British, etc., states. Ireland, which did not participate in this process, does not alter the general picture.

Matters proceeded somewhat differently in Eastern Europe. Whereas in the West nations developed into states, in the East multi-national states were formed, states consisting of several nationalities. Such are Austria-Hungary and Russia. In Austria, the Germans proved to be politically the most developed, and they took it upon themselves to unite the Austrian nationalities into a state. In Hungary, the most adapted for state organization were the Magyars – the core of the Hungarian nationalities – and it was they who united Hungary. In Russia, the uniting of the nationalities was undertaken by the Great Russians, who were headed by a historically formed, powerful and well-organized aristocratic military bureaucracy.

That was how matters proceeded in the East.

This special method of formation of states could take place only where feudalism had not yet been eliminated, where capitalism was feebly' developed, where the nationalities which had been forced into the

background had not yet been able to consolidate themselves economically into integral nations.

But capitalism also began to develop in the Eastern states. Trade and means of communication were developing. Large towns were springing up. The nations were becoming economically consolidated. Capitalism, erupting into the tranquil life of the nationalities which had been pushed into the background, was arousing them and stirring them into action. The development of the press and the theatre, the activity of the Reichsrat (Austria) and of the Duma (Russia) were helping to strengthen "national sentiments." The intelligentsia that had arisen was being imbued with "the national idea" and was acting in the same direction....

But the nations which had been pushed into the background and had now awakened to independent life, could no longer form themselves into independent national states; they encountered on their -path the very powerful resistance of the ruling strata of the dominant nations, which had long ago assumed the control of the state. They were too late!...

In this way the Czechs, Poles, etc., formed themselves into nations in Austria; the Croats, etc., in Hungary; the Letts, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Georgians, Armenians, etc., in Russia. What had been an exception in Western Europe (Ireland) became the rule in the East.

In the West, Ireland responded to its exceptional position by a national movement. In the East, the awakened nations were bound to respond in the same fashion.

Thus arose the circumstances which impelled the young nations of Eastern Europe on to the path of struggle.

The struggle began and flared up, to be sure, not between nations as a whole, but between the ruling classes of the dominant nations and of those that had been pushed into the background. The struggle is usually conducted by the urban petty bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation against

the big bourgeoisie of the dominant nation (Czechs and Germans), or by the rural bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation against the landlords of the dominant nation (Ukrainians in Poland), or by the whole "national" bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations against the ruling nobility of the dominant nation (Poland, Lithuania and the Ukraine in Russia).

The bourgeoisie plays the leading role.

The chief problem for the young bourgeoisie is the problem of the market. Its aim is to sell its goods and to emerge victorious from competition with the bourgeoisie of a different nationality. Hence its desire to secure its "own," its "home" market. The market is the first school in which the bourgeoisie learns its nationalism.

But matters are usually not confined to the market. The semi-feudal, semi-bourgeois bureaucracy of the dominant nation intervenes in the struggle with its own methods of "arresting and preventing." The bourgeoisie – whether big or small – of the dominant nation is able to deal more "swiftly" and "decisively" with its competitor. "Forces" are united and a series of restrictive measures is put into operation against the "alien" bourgeoisie, measures passing into acts of repression. The struggle spreads from the economic sphere to the political sphere. Restriction of freedom of movement, repression of language, restriction of franchise, closing of schools, religious restrictions, and so on, are piled upon the head of the "competitor." Of course, such measures are designed not only in the interest of the bourgeois classes of the dominant nation, but also in furtherance of the specifically caste aims, so to speak, of the ruling bureaucracy.

But from the point of view of the results achieved this is quite immaterial; the bourgeois classes and the bureaucracy in this matter go hand in hand – whether it be in Austria-Hungary or in Russia.

The bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation, repressed on every hand, is naturally stirred into movement. It appeals to its "native folk" and begins to shout about the "fatherland,'; claiming that its own cause is the cause of the

nation as a whole. It recruits itself an army from among its "countrymen" in the interests of ... the "fatherland." Nor do the "folk" always remain unresponsive to its appeals; they rally around its banner: the repression from above affects them too and provokes their discontent.

Thus, the national movement begins.

The strength of the national movement is determined by the degree to which the wide strata of the nation, the proletariat and peasantry, participate in it.

Whether the proletariat rallies to the banner of bourgeois nationalism depends on the degree of development of class antagonisms, on the class consciousness and degree of organization of the proletariat. The class-conscious proletariat has its own tried banner, and has no need to rally to the banner of the bourgeoisie.

As far as the peasants are concerned, their participation in the national movement depends primarily on the character of the repressions. If the repressions affect the "land," as was the case in Ireland, then the mass of the peasants immediately rally to the banner of the national movement.

On the other hand, if, for example, there is no seri *ous anti-Russian* nationalism in Georgia, it is primarily because there are neither Russian landlords nor a Russian big bourgeoisie there to supply the fuel for such nationalism among the masses. In Georgia there *is anti-Armenian* nationalism; but this is because there is still an Armenian big bourgeoisie there which, by getting the better of the small and still unconsolidated Georgian bourgeoisie, drives the latter to anti-Armenian nationalism. .

Depending on these factors, the national movement either assumes a mass character and steadily grows (as in Ireland and Galicia), or is converted into a series of petty collisions, degenerating into squabbles and "fights" over signboards (as in some of the small towns of Bohemia).

The content of the national movement, of course, cannot everywhere be the same: it is wholly determined by the diverse demands made by the movement. In Ireland the movement bears an agrarian character; in Bohemia it bears a "language" character; in one place the demand is for civil equality and religious freedom, in another for the nation's "own" officials, or its own Diet. The diversity of demands not infrequently reveals the diverse features which characterize a nation in general (language, territory, etc.). It is worthy of note that we never meet with a demand based on Bauer's all-embracing "national character." And this is natural: "national character" *in itself is* something intangible, and, as was correctly remarked by J. Strasser, "a politician can't do anything with it." [7]

Such, in general, are the forms and character of the national movement.

From what has been said it will be clear that the national struggle under the conditions of *rising* capitalism is a struggle of the bourgeois classes among themselves. Sometimes the bourgeoisie succeeds in drawing the proletariat into the national movement, and then the national struggle *externally* assumes a "nation-wide" character. But this is so only externally. *In its essence it is* always a bourgeois struggle, one that is to the advantage and profit mainly of the bourgeoisie.

But it does not by any means follow that the proletariat should not put up a fight against the policy of national oppression.

Restriction of freedom of movement, disfranchisement, repression of language, closing of schools, and other forms of persecution affect the workers no less, if not more, than the bourgeoisie. Such a state of affairs can only serve to retard the free development of the intellectual forces of the proletariat of subject nations. One cannot speak seriously of a full development of the intellectual faculties of the Tatar or Jewish worker if he is not allowed to use his native language at meetings and lectures, and if his schools are closed down.

But the policy of nationalist persecution is dangerous to the cause of the proletariat also on another account. It diverts the attention of large strata from social questions, questions of the class struggle, to national questions, questions "common" to the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. And this creates a favorable soil for lying propaganda about "harmony of interests," for glossing over the class interests of the proletariat and for the intellectual enslavement of the workers.

This creates a serious obstacle to the cause of uniting the workers of all nationalities. If a considerable proportion of the Polish workers are still in intellectual bondage to the bourgeois nationalists, if they still stand aloof from the international labor movement, it is chiefly because the age-old anti-Polish policy of the "powers that be" creates the soil for this bondage and hinders the emancipation of the workers from it.

But the policy of persecution does not stop there. It not infrequently passes from a "system" of *oppression* to a "system" of *inciting* nations against each other, to a "system" of massacres and pogroms. Of course, the latter system is not everywhere and always possible, but where it is possible – in the absence of elementary civil rights – it frequently assumes horrifying proportions and threatens to drown the cause of unity of the workers in blood and tears. The Caucasus and south Russia furnish numerous examples. "Divide and rule" – such is the purpose of the policy of incitement. And where such a policy succeeds, it is a tremendous evil for the proletariat and a serious obstacle to the cause of uniting the workers of all the nationalities in the state.

But the workers are interested in the complete amalgamation of all their fellow-workers into a single international army, in their speedy and final emancipation from intellectual bondage to the bourgeoisie, and in the full and free development of the intellectual forces of their brothers, whatever nation they may belong to.

The workers therefore combat and will continue to combat the policy of national oppression in all its forms, from the most subtle to the most crude,

as well as the policy of inciting nations against each other in all its forms.

Social-Democracy in all countries therefore proclaims the right of nations to self-determination.

The right of self-determination means that only the nation itself has the right to determine its destiny, that no one has the right *forcibly* to interfere in the life of the nation, to *destroy* its schools and other institutions, to *violate* its habits and customs, to *repress* its language, or *curtail* its rights.

This, of course, does not mean that Social-Democracy will support every custom and institution of a nation. While combating the coercion of any nation, it will uphold only the right of the *nation* itself to determine its own destiny, at the same time agitating against harmful customs and institutions of that nation in order to enable the toiling strata of the nation to emancipate themselves from them.

The right of self-determination means that a nation may arrange its life in the way it wishes. It has the right to arrange its life on the basis of autonomy. It has the right to enter into federal relations with other nations. It has the right to complete secession. Nations are sovereign, and all nations have equal rights.

This, of course, does not mean that Social-Democracy will support every demand of a nation. A nation has the right even to return to the old order of things; but this does not mean that Social-Democracy will subscribe to such a decision if taken by some institution of a particular nation. The obligations of Social-Democracy, which defends the interests of the proletariat, and the rights of a nation, which consists of various classes, are two different things.

In fighting for the right of nations to self-determination, the aim of Social-Democracy is to put an end to the policy of national oppression, to render it

impossible, and thereby to remove the grounds of strife between nations, to take the edge off that strife and reduce it to a minimum.

This is what essentially distinguishes the policy of the class-conscious proletariat from the policy of the bourgeoisie, which attempts to aggravate and fan the national struggle and to prolong and sharpen the national movement.

And that is why the class-conscious proletariat cannot rally under the "national" flag of the bourgeoisie.

That is why the so-called "evolutionary national" policy advocated by Bauer cannot become the policy of the proletariat. Bauer's attempt to identify his "evolutionary national" policy with the policy of the "modern working class" is an attempt to adapt the class struggle of the workers to the struggle of the nations.

The fate of a national movement, which is essentially a bourgeois movement, is naturally bound up with the fate of the bourgeoisie. The -final disappearance of a national movement is possible only with the downfall of the bourgeoisie. Only under the reign of socialism can peace be fully established. But even within the framework of capitalism it is possible to reduce the national struggle to a minimum, to undermine it at the root, to render it as harmless as possible to the proletariat. This is borne out, for example, by Switzerland and America. It requires that the country should be democratized and the nations be given the opportunity of free development.

Chapter 3: Presentation of the Question

A nation has the right freely to determine its own destiny. It has the right to arrange its life as it sees fit, without, of course, trampling on the rights of other nations. That is beyond dispute.

But *how* exactly should it arrange its own life, *what forms* should its future constitution take, if the interests of the majority of the nation and, above all, of the proletariat are to be borne in mind?

A nation has the right to arrange its life on autonomous lines. It even has the right to secede. But this does not mean that it should do so under all circumstances, that autonomy, or separation, will everywhere and always be advantageous for a nation, i.e., for its majority, i.e., for the toiling strata. The Transcaucasian Tatars as a nation may assemble, let us say, in their Diet and, succumbing to the influence of their beys and mullahs, decide to restore the old order of things and to secede from the state. According to the meaning of the clause on self-determination they are fully entitled to do so. But will this be in the interest of the toiling strata of the Tatar nation? Can Social-Democracy look on indifferently when the beys and mullahs assume the leadership of the masses in the solution of the national question?

Should not Social-Democracy interfere in the matter and influence the will of the nation in a definite way? Should it not come forward with a definite plan for the solution of the question, a plan which would be most advantageous for the Tatar masses?

But what solution would be most compatible with the interests of the toiling masses? Autonomy, federation or separation?

All these are problems the solution of which will depend on the concrete historical conditions in which the given nation finds itself.

More than that; conditions, like everything else, change, and a decision which is correct at one particular time may prove to be entirely unsuitable at another.

In the middle of the nineteenth century Marx was in favor of the secession of Russian Poland; and he was right, for it was then a question of emancipating a higher culture from a lower culture that was destroying it. And the question at that time was not only a theoretical one, an academic question, but a practical one, a question of actual reality....

At the end of the nineteenth century the Polish Marxists were already declaring against the secession of Poland; and they too were right, for during the fifty years that had elapsed profound changes had taken place, bringing Russia and Poland closer economically and culturally. Moreover, during that period the question of secession had been converted from a practical matter into a matter of academic dispute, which excited nobody except perhaps intellectuals abroad.

This, of course, by no means precludes the possibility that certain internal and external conditions may arise in which the question of the secession of Poland may again come on the order of the day.

The solution of the national question is possible only in connection with the historical conditions taken in their development.

The economic, political and cultural conditions of a given nation constitute the only key to the question *how* a particular nation ought to arrange its life and *what forms* its future constitution ought to take. It is possible that a specific solution of the question will be required for each nation. If the dialectical approach to a question is required anywhere it is required here, in the national question.

In view of this we must declare our decided opposition to a certain very widespread, but very summary manner of "solving" the national question,

which owes its inception to the Bund. We have in mind the easy method of referring to Austrian and South-Slav [8] Social-Democracy, which has supposedly already solved the national question and whose solution the Russian Social-Democrats should simply borrow. It is assumed that whatever, say, is right for Austria is also right for Russia. The most important and decisive factor is lost sight of here, namely, the concrete historical conditions in Russia as a whole and in the life of each of the nations inhabiting Russia in particular.

Listen, for example, to what the well-known Bundist, V. Kossovsky, says:

"When at the Fourth Congress of the Bund the principles of the question (i.e., the national question – *J. St.*) were discussed, the proposal made by one of the members of the congress to settle the question in the spirit of the resolution of the South-Slav Social-Democratic Party met with general approval." [9]

And the result was that "the congress unanimously adopted" ... national autonomy.

And that was all! No analysis of the actual conditions in Russia, no investigation of the condition of the Jews in Russia. They first borrowed the solution of the South-Slav Social-Democratic Party, then they "approved" it, and finally they "unanimously adopted" it! This is the way the Bundists present and "solve" the national question in Russia....

As a matter of fact, Austria and Russia represent entirely different conditions. This explains why the Social-Democrats in Austria, when they adopted their national program at Brünn (1899) [10] in the spirit of the resolution of the South-Slav Social-Democratic Party (with certain insignificant amendments, it is true), approached the question in an entirely non-Russian way, so to speak, and, of course, solved it in a non-Russian way.

First, as to the presentation of the question. How is the question presented by the Austrian theoreticians of cultural-national autonomy, the interpreters of the Brünn national program and the resolution of the South-Slav Social-Democratic Party, Springer and Bauer?

"Whether a multi-national state is possible," says Springer, "and whether, in particular, the Austrian nationalities are obliged to form a single political entity, is a question we shall not answer here but shall assume to be settled. For anyone who will not concede this possibility and necessity, our investigation will, of course, be purposeless. Our theme is as follows: inasmuch as these nations are *obliged* to live together, what *legal forms* will enable them *to live together in the best possible way?"* (Springer's italics). [11]

Thus, the starting point is the state integrity of Austria.

Bauer says the same thing:

"We therefore start from the assumption that the Austrian nations will remain in the same state union in which they exist at present and inquire how the nations within this union will arrange their relations among themselves and to the state."

Here again the first thing is the integrity of Austria.

Can Russian Social-Democracy present the question *in this way?* No, it cannot. And it cannot because from the very outset it holds the view of the right of nations to self-determination, by virtue of which a nation has the right of secession.

Even the Bundist Goldblatt admitted at the Second Congress of Russian Social-Democracy that the latter could not abandon the standpoint of self-determination. Here is what Goldblatt said on that occasion:

"Nothing can be said against the right of self-determination. If any nation is striving for independence, we must not oppose it. If Poland does not wish to enter into lawful wedlock with Russia, it is not for us to interfere with her."

All this is true. But it follows that the starting points of the Austrian and Russian Social-Democrats, far from being identical, are diametrically opposite. After this, can there be any question of borrowing the national program of the Austrians?

Furthermore, the Austrians hope to achieve the "freedom of nationalities" by means of petty reforms, by slow steps. While they propose cultural-national autonomy as a practical measure, they do not count on any radical change, on a democratic movement for liberation, which they do not even contemplate. The Russian Marxists, on the other hand, associate the "freedom of nationalities" with a probable radical change, with a democratic movement for liberation, having no grounds for counting on reforms. And this essentially alters matters in regard to the probable fate of the nations of Russia.

"Of course," says Bauer, "there is little probability that national autonomy will be the result of a great decision, of a bold action. Austria will develop towards national autonomy step by step, by a slow process of development, in the course of a severe struggle, as a consequence of which legislation and administration will be in a state of chronic paralysis. The new constitution will not be created by a great legislative act, but by a multitude of separate enactments for individual provinces and individual communities."

Springer says the same thing.

"I am very well aware," he writes, "that institutions of this kind (i.e., organs of national autonomy – *J. St.*) are not created in a single year or a single decade. The reorganization of the Prussian administration alone took considerable time.... It took the Prussians two decades finally to establish their basic administrative institutions. Let nobody think that I harbor any

illusions as to the time required and the difficulties to be overcome in Austria."

All this is very definite. But can the Russian Marxists avoid associating the national question with "bold actions"? Can they count on partial reforms, on "a multitude of separate enactments" as a means for achieving the "freedom of nationalities"? But if they cannot and must not do so, is it not clear that the methods of struggle of the Austrians and the Russians and their prospects must be entirely different? How in such a state of affairs can they confine themselves to the one-sided, milk-and-water cultural-national autonomy of the Austrians? One or the other: either those who are in favor of borrowing do not count on "bold actions" in Russia, or they do count on such actions but "know not what they do."

Finally, the immediate tasks facing Russia and Austria are entirely different and consequently dictate different methods of solving the national question. In Austria parliamentarism prevails, and under present conditions no development in Austria is possible without parliament. But parliamentary life and legislation in Austria are frequently brought to a complete standstill by severe conflicts between the national parties. That explains the chronic political crisis from which Austria has for a long time been suffering. Hence, in Austria the national question is the very hub of political life; it is the vital question. It is therefore not surprising that the Austrian Social-Democratic politicians should first of all try in one way or another to find a solution for the national conflicts – of course on the basis of the existing parliamentary system, by parliamentary methods....

Not so with Russia. In the first place, in Russia "there is no parliament, thank God." [12] In the second place – and this is the main point – the hub of the political life of Russia is not the national but the agrarian question. Consequently, the fate of the Russian problem, and, accordingly, the "liberation" of the nations too, is bound up in Russia with the solution of the agrarian question, i.e., with the destruction of the relics of feudalism, i.e., with the democratization of the country. That explains why in Russia the national question is not an independent and decisive one, but a part of the general and more important question of the emancipation of the country.

"The barrenness of the Austrian parliament," writes Springer, "is due precisely to the fact that every reform gives rise to antagonisms within the national parties which may affect their unity. The leaders of the parties, therefore, avoid everything that smacks of reform. Progress in Austria is generally conceivable only if the nations are granted indefeasible legal rights which will relieve them of the necessity of constantly maintaining national militant groups in parliament and will enable them to turn their attention to the solution of economic and social problems."

Bauer says the same thing.

"National peace is indispensable first of all for the state. The state cannot permit legislation to be brought to a standstill by the very stupid question of language or by every quarrel between excited people on a linguistic frontier, or over every new school."

All this is clear. But it is no less clear that the national question in Russia is on an entirely different plane. It is not the national, but the agrarian question, that decides the fate of progress in Russia. The national question is a subordinate one.

And so, we have different presentations of the question, different prospects and methods of struggle, different immediate tasks. Is it not clear that, such being the state of affairs, only pedants who "solve" the national question without reference to space and time can think of adopting examples from Austria and of borrowing a program?

To repeat: the concrete historical conditions as the starting point, and the dialectical presentation of the question as the only correct way of presenting it – such is the key to solving the national question.

Chapter 4: Cultural-National Autonomy

We spoke above of the formal aspect of the Austrian national program and of the methodological grounds which make it impossible for the Russian Marxists simply to adopt the example of Austrian Social-Democracy and make the latter's program their own.

Let us now examine the essence of the program itself

What then is the national program of the Austrian Social-Democrats?

It is expressed in two words: cultural-national autonomy.

This means, firstly, that autonomy would be granted, let us say, not to Bohemia or Poland, which are inhabited mainly by Czechs and Poles, but to Czechs and Poles generally, irrespective of territory, no matter what part of Austria they inhabit.

That is why this autonomy is called *national* and not territorial.

It means, secondly, that the Czechs, Poles, Germans, and so on, scattered over the various parts of Austria, taken personally, as individuals, are to be organized into integral nations, and are as such to form part of the Austrian state. In this way Austria would represent not a union of autonomous regions, but a union of autonomous nationalities, constituted irrespective of territory.

It means, thirdly, that the national institutions which are to be created for this purpose for the Poles, Czechs, and so forth, are to have jurisdiction only over "cultural," not "political" questions. Specifically political questions would be reserved for the Austrian parliament (the Reichsrat).

That is why this autonomy is also called *cultural* , cultural-national autonomy.

And here is the text of the program adopted by the Austrian Social-Democratic Party at the Brünn Congress in 1899. [13]

Having referred to the fact that "national dissension in Austria is hindering political progress," that "the final solution of the national question... is primarily a cultural necessity," and that "the solution is possible only in a genuinely democratic society, constructed on the basis of universal, direct and equal suffrage," the program goes on to say:

"The preservation and development of the national peculiarities [14] of the peoples of Austria is possible only on the basis of equal rights and by avoiding all oppression. Hence, all bureaucratic state centralism and the feudal privileges of individual provinces must first of all be rejected.

"Under these conditions, and only under these conditions, will it be possible to establish national order in Austria in place of national dissension, namely, on the following principles:

"1. Austria must be transformed into a democratic state federation of nationalities.

"2. The historical crown provinces must be replaced by nationally delimited self-governing corporations, in each of which legislation and administration shall be entrusted to national parliaments elected on the basis of universal, direct and equal suffrage.

"3. All the self-governing regions of one and the same nation must jointly form a single national union, which shall manage its national affairs on an absolutely autonomous basis.

"4. The rights of national minorities must be guaranteed by a special law passed by the Imperial Parliament."

The program ends with an appeal for the solidarity of all the nations of Austria. [15]

It is not difficult to see that this program retains certain traces of "territorialism," but that in general it gives a formulation of national autonomy. It is not without good reason that Springer, the first agitator on behalf of cultural-national autonomy, greets it with enthusiasm; Bauer also supports this program, calling it a "theoretical victory" for national autonomy; only, in the interests of greater clarity, he proposes that Point 4 be replaced by a more definite formulation, which would declare the necessity of "constituting the national minority within each self-governing region into a public corporation" for the management of educational and other cultural affairs.

Such is the national program of Austrian Social-Democracy.

Let us examine its scientific foundations.

Let us see how the Austrian Social-Democratic Party justifies the cultural-national autonomy it advocates.

Let us turn to the theoreticians of cultural-national autonomy, Springer and Bauer.

The starting point of national autonomy is the conception of a nation as a union of individuals without regard to a definite territory.

"Nationality," according to Springer, "is not essentially connected with territory"; nations are "autonomous unions of persons."

Bauer also speaks of a nation as a "community of persons" which does not enjoy "exclusive sovereignty in any particular region."

But the persons constituting a nation do not always live in one compact mass; they are frequently divided into groups, and in that form are interspersed among alien national organisms. It is capitalism which drives them into various regions and cities in search of a livelihood. But when they enter foreign national territories and there form minorities, these groups are made to suffer by the local national majorities in the way of restrictions on their language, schools, etc. Hence national conflicts. Hence the "unsuitability" of territorial autonomy. The only solution to such a situation, according to Springer and Bauer, is to organize the minorities of the given nationality dispersed over various parts of the state into a single, general, inter-class national union. Such a union alone, in their opinion, can protect the cultural interests of national minorities, and it alone is capable of putting an end to national discord.

"Hence the necessity," says Springer, "to organize the nationalities, to invest them with rights and responsibilities...." Of course, "a law is easily drafted, but will it be effective? "... "If one wants to make a law for nations, one must first create the nations..." "Unless the nationalities are constituted it is impossible to create national rights and eliminate national dissension."

Bauer expressed himself in the same spirit when he proposed, as "a demand of the working class," that "the minorities should be constituted into public corporations based on the personal principle."

But how is a nation to be organized? How is one to determine to what nation any given individual belongs?

"Nationality," says Springer, "will be determined by certificates; every individual domiciled in a given region must declare his affiliation to one of the nationalities of that region."

"The personal principle," says Bauer, "presumes that the population will be divided into nationalities.... On the basis of the free declaration of the adult citizens national registers must be drawn up."

Further.

"All the Germans in nationally homogeneous districts," says Bauer, "and all the Germans entered in the national registers in the dual districts will constitute the German nation and elect a *National Council* ."

The same applies to the Czechs, Poles, and so on.

"The *National Council,"* according to Springer, "is the cultural parliament of the nation, empowered to establish the principles and to grant funds, thereby assuming guardianship over national education, national literature, art and science, the formation of academies, museums, galleries, theatres," etc.

Such will be the organization of a nation and its central institution.

According to Bauer, the Austrian Social-Democratic Party is striving, by the creation of these inter-class institutions "to make national culture ... the possession of the whole people and thereby *unite all the members of the nation into a national-cultural community."* (our italics).

One might think that all this concerns Austria alone. But Bauer does not agree. He emphatically declares that national autonomy is essential also for other states which, like Austria, consist of several nationalities.

"In the multi-national state," according to Bauer, "the working class of all the nations opposes the national power policy of the propertied classes with the demand for national autonomy."

Then, imperceptibly substituting national autonomy for the self-determination of nations, he continues:

"Thus, national autonomy, the self-determination of nations, will necessarily become the constitutional program of the proletariat of all the nations in a multi-national state."

But he goes still further. He profoundly believes that the inter-class "national unions" "constituted" by him and Springer will serve as a sort of prototype of the future socialist society. For he knows that "the socialist system of society... will divide humanity into nationally delimited communities"; that under socialism there will take place "a grouping of humanity into autonomous national communities," that thus, "socialist society will undoubtedly present a checkered picture of national unions of persons and territorial corporations, and that accordingly "the socialist principle of nationality is a higher synthesis of the national principle and national autonomy."

Enough, it would seem..

These are the arguments for cultural-national autonomy as given in the works of Bauer and Springer.

The first thing that strikes the eye is the entirely inexplicable and absolutely unjustifiable substitution of national autonomy for self-determination of nations. One or the other: either Bauer failed to understand the meaning of self-determination, or he did understand it but for some reason or other deliberately narrowed its meaning. For there is no doubt a) that cultural-national autonomy presupposes the integrity of the multi-national state, whereas self-determination goes outside the framework of this integrity, and b) that self-determination endows a nation with complete rights, whereas national autonomy endows it only with "cultural" rights. That in the first place.

In the second place, a combination of internal and external conditions is fully possible at some future time by virtue of which one or another of the nationalities may decide to secede from a multi-national state, say from Austria. Did not the Ruthenian Social-Democrats at the Brünn Party Congress announce their readiness to unite the "two parts" of their people into one whole? [16] What, in such a case, becomes of national autonomy, which is *"inevitable for the proletariat of all the nations"?* What sort of "solution" of the problem is it that mechanically squeezes nations into the Procrustean bed of an integral state?

Further: National autonomy is contrary to the whole course of development of nations. It calls for the organization of nations; but can they be artificially welded together if life, if economic development tears whole groups from them and disperses these groups over various regions? There is no doubt that in the early stages of capitalism nations become welded together. But there is also no doubt that in the higher stages of capitalism a process of dispersion of nations sets in, a process whereby a whole number of groups separate off from the nations, going off in search of a livelihood and subsequently settling permanently in other regions of the state; in the course of this these settlers lose their old connections and acquire new ones in their new domicile, and from generation to generation acquire new habits and new tastes, and possibly a new language. The question arises: is it possible to unite into a single national union groups that have grown so distinct? Where are the magic links to unite what cannot be united? Is it conceivable that, for instance, the Germans of the Baltic Provinces and the Germans of Transcaucasia can be "united into a single nation"? But if it is not conceivable and not possible, wherein does national autonomy differ from the utopia of the old nationalists, who endeavored to turn back the wheel of history?

But the unity of a nation diminishes not only as a result of migration. It diminishes also from internal causes, owing to the growing acuteness of the class struggle. In the early stages of capitalism one can still speak of a "common culture" of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. But as large-scale industry develops and the class struggle becomes more and more acute, this

"common culture" begins to melt away. One cannot seriously speak of the "common culture" of a nation when employers and workers of one and the same nation cease to understand each other. What "common destiny" can there be when the bourgeoisie thirsts for war, and the proletariat declares "war on war"? Can a single inter-class national union be formed from such opposed elements? And, after this, can one speak of the "union of all the members of the nation into a national-cultural community"? Is it not obvious that national autonomy is contrary to the whole course of the class struggle?

But let us assume for a moment that the slogan "organize the nation" is practicable. One might understand bourgeois-nationalist parliamentarians endeavoring to "organize" a nation for the purpose of securing additional votes. But since when have Social-Democrats begun to occupy themselves with "organizing" nations, "constituting" nations, "creating" nations?

What sort of Social-Democrats are they who in the epoch of extreme intensification of the class struggle organize inter-class national unions? Until now the Austrian, as well as every other, Social-Democratic party, had one task before it: namely, to organize the proletariat. That task has apparently become "antiquated." Springer and Bauer are now setting a "new" task, a more absorbing task, namely, to "create," to "organize" a nation.

However, logic has its obligations: he who adopts national autonomy must also adopt this "new" task;

but to adopt the latter means to abandon the class position and to take the path of nationalism.

Springer's and Bauer's cultural-national autonomy is a subtle form of nationalism.

And it is by no means fortuitous that the national program of the Austrian Social-Democrats enjoins a concern for the *"preservation* and

development of the national peculiarities of the peoples." Just think: to "preserve" such "national peculiarities" of the Transcaucasian Tatars as self-flagellation at the festival of *Shakhsei-Vakhsei* ; or to "develop" such "national peculiarities" of the Georgians as the vendetta! ...

A demand of this character is in place in an outright bourgeois nationalist program; and if it appears in the program of the Austrian Social-Democrats it is because national autonomy tolerates such demands, it does not contradict them.

But if national autonomy is unsuitable now, it will be still more unsuitable in the future, socialist society.

Bauer's prophecy regarding the "division of humanity into nationally delimited communities" is refuted by the whole course of development of modern human society. National barriers are being demolished and are falling, rather than becoming firmer. As early as the 'forties Marx declared that "national differences and antagonisms between peoples are daily more and more vanishing" and that "the supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster." [17] The subsequent development of mankind, accompanied as it was by the colossal growth of capitalist production, the reshuffling of nationalities and the union of people within ever larger territories, emphatically confirms Marx's thought.

Bauer's desire to represent socialist society as a "checkered picture of national unions of persons and territorial corporations" is a timid attempt to substitute for Marx's conception of socialism a revised version of Bakunin's conception. The history of socialism proves that every such attempt contains the elements of inevitable failure.

There is no need to mention the kind of "socialist principle of nationality" glorified by Bauer, which, in our opinion, substitutes for the socialist principle of the *class struggle* the bourgeois *"principle of nationality."* If national autonomy is based on such a dubious principle, it must be admitted that it can only cause harm to the working-class movement.

True, such nationalism is not so transparent, for it is skillfully masked by socialist phrases, but it is all the more harmful to the proletariat for that reason. We can always cope with open nationalism, for it can easily be discerned. It is much more difficult to combat nationalism when it is masked and unrecognizable beneath its mask. Protected by the armor of socialism, it is less vulnerable and more tenacious. Implanted among the workers, it poisons the atmosphere and spreads harmful ideas of mutual distrust and segregation among the workers of the different nationalities.

But this does not exhaust the harm caused by national autonomy. It prepares the ground not only for the segregation of nations, but also for breaking up the united labor movement. The idea of national autonomy creates the psychological conditions for the division of the united workers' party into separate parties built on national lines. The breakup of the party is followed by the breakup of the trade unions, and complete segregation is the result. In this way the united class movement is broken up into separate national rivulets.

Austria, the home of "national autonomy," provides the most deplorable examples of this. As early as 1897 (the Wimberg Party Congress [18]) the once united Austrian Social-Democratic Party began to break up into separate parties. The breakup became still more marked after the Brünn Party Congress (1899), which adopted national autonomy. Matters have finally come to such a pass that in place of a united international party there are now six national parties, of which the Czech Social-Democratic Party will not even have anything to do with the German Social-Democratic Party.

But with the parties are associated the trade unions. In Austria, both in the parties and in the trade unions, the main brunt of the work is borne by the same Social-Democratic workers. There was therefore reason to fear that separatism in the party would lead to separatism in the trade unions and that the trade unions would also break up. That, in fact, is what happened: the trade unions have also divided according to nationality. Now things frequently go so far that the Czech workers will even break a strike of

German workers, or will unite at municipal elections with the Czech bourgeois against the German workers.

It will be seen from the foregoing that cultural-national autonomy is no solution of the national question. Not only that, it serves to aggravate and confuse the question by creating a situation which favors the destruction of the unity of the labor movement, fosters the segregation of the workers according to nationality and intensifies friction among them.

Such is the harvest of national autonomy.

Chapter 5: The Bund, Its Nationalism, Its Separatism

We said above that Bauer, while granting the necessity of national autonomy for the Czechs, Poles, and so on, nevertheless opposes similar autonomy for the Jews. In answer to the question, "Should the working class demand autonomy for the Jewish people?" Bauer says that "national autonomy cannot be demanded by the Jewish workers." According to Bauer, the reason is that "capitalist society makes it impossible for them (the Jews – *J. St.*) to continue as a nation."

In brief, the Jewish nation is coming to an end, and hence there is nobody to demand national autonomy for. The Jews are being assimilated.

This view of the fate of the Jews as a nation is not a new one. It was expressed by Marx as early as the 'forties, [19] in reference chiefly to the German Jews. It was repeated by Kautsky in 1903, [20] in reference to the Russian Jews. It is now being repeated by Bauer in reference to the Austrian Jews, with the difference, however, that he denies not the present but the future of the Jewish nation.

Bauer explains the impossibility of preserving the existence of the Jews as a nation by the fact that "the Jews have no closed territory of settlement." This explanation, in the main a correct one, does not however express the whole truth. The fact of the matter is primarily that among the Jews there is no large and stable stratum connected with the land, which would naturally rivet the nation together, serving not only as its framework but also as a "national" market. Of the five or six million Russian Jews, only three to four per cent are connected with agriculture in any way. The remaining ninety-six per cent are employed in trade, industry, in urban institutions, and in general are town dwellers; moreover, they are spread all over Russia and do not constitute a majority in a single gubernia.

Thus, interspersed as national minorities in areas inhabited by other nationalities, the Jews as a rule serve "foreign" nations as manufacturers and traders and as members of the liberal professions, naturally adapting themselves to the "foreign nations" in respect to language and so forth. All this, taken together with the increasing re-shuffling of nationalities characteristic of developed forms of capitalism, leads to the assimilation of the Jews. The abolition of the "Pale of Settlement" would only serve to hasten this process of assimilation.

The question of national autonomy for the Russian Jews consequently assumes a somewhat curious character: autonomy is being proposed for a nation whose future is denied and whose existence has still to be proved!

Nevertheless, this was the curious and shaky position taken up by the Bund when at its Sixth Congress (1905) it adopted a "national program" on the fines of national autonomy.

Two circumstances impelled the Bund to take this step.

The first circumstance is the existence of the Bund as an organization of Jewish, and only Jewish, Social-Democratic workers. Even before 1897 the Social-Democratic groups active among the Jewish workers set themselves the aim of creating "a special Jewish workers' organization." [21] They founded such an organization in 1897 by uniting to form the Bund. That was at a time when Russian Social-Democracy as an integral body virtually did not yet exist. The Bund steadily grew and spread, and stood out more and more vividly against the background of the bleak days of Russian Social-Democracy.... Then came the 1900's. A *mass* labor movement came into being. Polish Social-Democracy grew and drew the Jewish workers into the mass struggle. Russian Social-Democracy grew and attracted the "Bund" workers. Lacking a territorial basis, the national framework of the Bund became too restrictive. The Bund was faced with the problem of either merging with the general international tide, or of upholding its independent existence as an extra-territorial organization. The Bund chose the latter course.

Thus, grew up the "theory" that the Bund is "the sole representative of the Jewish proletariat."

But to justify this strange "theory" in any "simple" way became impossible. Some kind of foundation "on principle," some justification "on principle," was needed. Cultural-national autonomy provided such a foundation. The Bund seized upon it, borrowing it from the Austrian Social-Democrats. If the Austrians had not had such a program the Bund would have invented it in order to justify its independent existence "on principle."

Thus, after a timid attempt in 1901 (the Fourth Congress), the Bund definitely adopted a "national program" in 1905 (the Sixth Congress).

The second circumstance is the peculiar position of the Jews as separate national minorities within compact majorities of other nationalities in integral regions. We have already said that this position is undermining the existence of the Jews as a nation and puts them on the road to assimilation. But this is an objective process. Subjectively, in the minds of the Jews, it provokes a reaction and gives rise to the demand for a guarantee of the rights of a national minority, for a guarantee against assimilation. Preaching as it does the vitality of the Jewish "nationality," the Bund could not avoid being in favor of a "guarantee." And, having taken up this position, it could not but accept national autonomy. For if the Bund could seize upon any autonomy at all, it could only be national autonomy, i.e., *cultural-national* autonomy; there could be no question of territorial-political autonomy for the Jews, since the Jews have no definite integral territory.

It is noteworthy that the Bund from the outset stressed the character of national autonomy as a guarantee of the rights of national minorities, as a guarantee of the "free development" of nations. Nor was it fortuitous that the representative of the Bund at the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Party, Goldblatt, defined national autonomy as "institutions which *guarantee* them (i.e., nations – *J. St.*) complete freedom of cultural development." [22] A similar proposal was made by

supporters of the ideas of the Bund to the Social-Democratic group in the Fourth Duma....

In this way the Bund adopted the curious position of national autonomy for the Jews.

We have examined above national autonomy in general. The examination showed that national autonomy leads to nationalism. We shall see later that the Bund has arrived at the same end point. But the Bund also regards national autonomy from a special aspect, namely, from the aspect of *guarantees* of the rights of national minorities. Let us also examine the question from this special aspect. It is all the more necessary since the problem of national minorities – and not of the Jewish minorities alone – is one of serious moment for Social-Democracy.

And so, it is a question of *"institutions which guarantee"* nations "complete freedom of cultural development" (our italics – *J. St.*).

But what are these "institutions which guarantee," etc.?

They are primarily the "National Council" of Springer and Bauer, something in the nature of a Diet for cultural affairs.

But can these institutions guarantee a nation "complete freedom of cultural development"? Can a Diet for cultural affairs guarantee a nation against nationalist persecution?

The Bund believes it can.

But history proves the contrary.

At one time a Diet existed in Russian Poland. It was a political Diet and, of course, endeavored to guarantee freedom of "cultural development" for the Poles. But, far from succeeding in doing so, it itself succumbed in the

unequal struggle against the political conditions generally prevailing in Russia.

A Diet has been in existence for a long time in Finland, and it too endeavors to protect the Finnish nationality from "encroachments," but how far it succeeds in doing so everybody can see.

Of course, there are Diets and Diets, and it is not so easy to cope with the democratically organized Finnish Diet as it was with the aristocratic Polish Diet. But the *decisive* factor, nevertheless, is not the Diet, but the general regime in Russia. If such a grossly Asiatic social and political regime existed in Russia now as in the past, at the time the Polish Diet was abolished, things would go much harder with the Finnish Diet. Moreover, the policy of "encroachments" upon Finland is growing, and it cannot be said that it has met with defeat....

If such is the case with old, historically evolved institutions – political Diets – still less will young Diets, young institutions, especially such feeble institutions as "cultural" Diets, be able to guarantee the free development of nations.

Obviously, it is not a question of "institutions," but of the general regime prevailing in the country. If there is no democracy in the country there can be no guarantees of "complete freedom for cultural development" of nationalities. One may say with certainty that the more democratic a country is the fewer are the "encroachments" made on the "freedom of nationalities," and the greater are the guarantees against such "encroachments."

Russia is a semi-Asiatic country, and therefore in Russia the policy of "encroachments" not infrequently assumes the grossest form, the form of pogroms. It need hardly be said that in Russia "guarantees" have been reduced to the very minimum.

Germany is, however, European, and she enjoys a measure of political freedom. It is not surprising that the policy of "encroachments" there never takes the form of pogroms.

In France, of course, there are still more "guarantees," for France is more democratic than Germany.

There is no need to mention Switzerland, where, thanks to her highly developed, although bourgeois democracy, nationalities live in freedom, whether they are a minority or a majority.

Thus, the Bund adopts a false position when it asserts that "institutions" by themselves are able to guarantee complete cultural development for nationalities.

It may be said that the Bund itself regards the establishment of democracy in Russia as a *preliminary* condition for the "creation of institutions" and guarantees of freedom. But this is not the case. From the report of the Eighth Conference of the Bund [23] it will be seen that the Bund thinks it can secure "institutions" *on the basis of* the present system in Russia, by "reforming" the *Jewish community* .

"The community," one of the leaders of the Bund said at this conference, "may become the nucleus of future cultural-national autonomy. Cultural-national autonomy is a form of self-service on the part of nations, a form of satisfying national needs. The community form conceals within itself a similar content. They are links in the same chain, stages in the same evolution." [24]

On this basis, the conference decided that it was necessary to strive "for *reforming* the Jewish community and transforming it by *legislative means* into a secular institution," democratically organized (our italics – *J. St.*).

It is evident that the Bund considers as the condition and guarantee not the democratization of Russia, but some future "secular institution" of the Jews, obtained by "reforming the Jewish community," so to speak, by "legislative" means, through the Duma:

But we have already seen that "institutions" in themselves cannot serve as "guarantees" if the regime in the state generally is not a democratic one.

But what, it may be asked, will be - the position under a future democratic system? Will not special "cultural institutions which guarantee," etc., be required even under democracy? What is the position in this respect in democratic Switzerland, for example? Are there special cultural institutions in Switzerland on the pattern of Springer's "National Council"? No, there are *not.* But do not the cultural interests of, for instance, the Italians, who constitute a minority there, suffer for that reason? One does not seem to hear that they do. And that is quite natural: in Switzerland all special cultural "institutions," which supposedly "guarantee," etc., are rendered superfluous by democracy.

And so, impotent in the present and superfluous in the future – such are the *institutions* of cultural-national autonomy, and such is national autonomy.

But it becomes still more harmful when it is thrust upon a "nation" whose existence and future are open to doubt. In such cases the advocates of national autonomy are obliged to protect and preserve all the peculiar features of the "nation," the bad as well as the good, just for the sake of "saving the nation" from assimilation, just for the sake of "preserving" it.

That the Bund should take this dangerous path was inevitable. And it did take it. We are referring to the resolutions of recent conferences of the Bund on the question of the "Sabbath," "Yiddish," etc.

Social-Democracy strives to secure *for all nations* the right to use their own language. But that does not satisfy the Bund; it demands that "the

rights of the *Jewish* language" (our italics – *J. St.*) be championed with "exceptional persistence," and the Bund itself in the elections to the Fourth Duma declared that it would give "preference to those of them (i.e., electors) who undertake to defend the rights of the Jewish language."

Not the *general* right of all nations to use their own language, but the *particular* right of the Jewish language, Yiddish! Let the workers of the various nationalities fight *primarily* for their own language: the Jews for Jewish, the Georgians for Georgian, and so forth. The struggle for the general right of all nations is a secondary matter. You do not have to recognize the right of all oppressed nationalities to use their own language; but if you have recognized the right of Yiddish, know that the Bund will vote for you, the Bund will "prefer" you.

But in what way then does the Bund differ from the bourgeois nationalists?

Social-Democracy strives to secure the establishment of a compulsory weekly rest day. But that does not satisfy the Bund; it demands that "by legislative means" "the Jewish proletariat should be guaranteed the right to observe their Sabbath and be relieved of the obligation to observe another day. "*

It is to be expected that the Bund will take another "step forward" and demand the right to observe all the ancient Hebrew holidays. And if, to the misfortune of the Bund, the Jewish workers have discarded religious prejudices and do not want to observe these holidays, the Bund with its agitation for "the right to the Sabbath," will remind them of the Sabbath, it will, so to speak, cultivate among them "the Sabbatarian spirit. "...

Quite comprehensible, therefore, are the "passionate speeches" delivered at the Eighth Conference of the Bund demanding "Jewish hospitals," a demand that was based on the argument that "a patient feels more at home among his own people," that "the Jewish worker will not feel at ease among Polish workers, but will feel at ease among Jewish shopkeepers."

Preservation of everything Jewish, conservation of *all* the national peculiarities of the Jews, even those that are patently harmful to the proletariat, isolation of the Jews from everything non-Jewish, even the establishment of special hospitals – that is the level to which the Bund has sunk!

Comrade Plekhanov was right a thousand times over when he said that the Bund "is adapting socialism to nationalism." Of course, V. Kossovsky and Bundists like him may denounce Plekhanov as a "demagogue" [25] – paper will put up with anything that is written on it – but those who are familiar with the activities of the Bund will easily realize that these brave fellows are simply afraid to tell the truth about themselves and are hiding behind strong language about "demagogy. "...

But since it holds such a position on the national question, the Bund was naturally obliged, in the matter of organization also, to take the path of segregating the Jewish workers, the path of formation of national curiae within Social-Democracy. Such is the logic of national autonomy!

And, in fact, the Bund did pass from the theory of "sole representation" to the theory of "national demarcation" of workers. The Bund demands that Russian Social-Democracy should "in its organizational structure introduce demarcation according to nationalities." From "demarcation" it made a "step forward" to the theory of "segregation." It is not for nothing that speeches were made at the Eighth Conference of the Bund declaring that "national existence lies in segregation."

Organizational federalism harbors the elements of disintegration and separatism. The Bund is heading for separatism.

And, indeed, there is nothing else it can head for. Its very existence as an extra-territorial organization drives it to separatism. The Bund does not possess a definite integral territory; it operates on "foreign" territories, whereas the neighboring Polish, Lettish and Russian Social-Democracies

are international territorial collective bodies. But the result is that every extension of these collective bodies means a "loss" to the Bund and a restriction of its field of action. There are two alternatives: either Russian Social-Democracy as a whole must be reconstructed on the basis of national federalism – which will enable the Bund to "secure" the Jewish proletariat for itself; or the territorial-international principle of these collective bodies remains in force – in which case the Bund must be reconstructed on the basis of internationalism, as is the case with the Polish and Lettish Social-Democracies.

This explains why the Bund from the very beginning demanded "the reorganization of Russian Social-Democracy on a federal basis." [26]

In 1906, yielding to the pressure from below in favor of unity, the Bund chose a middle path and joined Russian Social-Democracy. But how did it join? Whereas the Polish and Lettish Social-Democracies joined for the purpose of peaceable joint action, the Bund joined for the purpose of waging war for a federation. That is exactly what Medem, the leader of the Bundists, said at the time:

"We are joining not for the sake of an idyll, but in order to fight. There is no idyll, and only Manilovs could hope for one in the near future. The Bund must join the Party armed from head to foot." [27]

It would be wrong to regard this as an expression of evil intent on Medem's part. It is not a matter of evil intent, but of the peculiar position of the Bund, which compels it to fight Russian Social-Democracy, which is built on the basis of internationalism. And in fighting it the Bund naturally violated the interests of unity. Finally, matters went so far that the Bund formally broke with Russian Social-Democracy, violating its statutes, and in the elections to the Fourth Duma joining forces with the Polish nationalists against the Polish Social-Democrats.

The Bund has apparently found that a rupture is the best guarantee for independent activity.

And so, the "principle" of organizational "demarcation" led to separatism and to a complete rupture.

In a controversy with the old *Iskra* [28] on the question of federalism, the Bund once wrote:

" *Iskra* wants to assure us that federal relations between the Bund and Russian Social-Democracy are bound to weaken the ties between them. We cannot refute this opinion by referring to practice in Russia, for the simple reason that Russian Social-Democracy does not exist as a federal body. But we can refer to the extremely instructive experience of Social-Democracy in Austria, which assumed a federal character by virtue of the decision of the Party Congress of 1897."

That was written in 1902.

But we are now in the year 1913. We now have both Russian "practice" and the "experience of Social-Democracy in Austria."

What do they tell us?

Let us begin with "the extremely instructive experience of Social-Democracy in Austria." Up to 1896 there was a united Social-Democratic Party in Austria. In that year the Czechs at the International Congress in London for the first time demanded separate representation, and were given it. In 1897, at the Vienna (Wimberg) Party Congress, the united party was formally Liquidated and, in its place, a federal league of six national "Social-Democratic groups" was set up. Subsequently these "groups" were converted into independent parties, which gradually severed contact with one another. Following the parties, the parliamentary group broke up – national "clubs" were formed. Next came the trade unions, which also split according to nationalities. Even the co-operative societies were affected, the Czech separatists calling upon the workers to split them up. [29] We will

not dwell on the fact that separatist agitation weakens the workers' sense of solidarity and frequently drives them to strike-breaking.

Thus "the extremely instructive experience of Social-Democracy in Austria" speaks *against* the Bund and for the old *Iskra.* Federalism in the Austrian party has led to the most outrageous separatism, to the destruction of the unity of the labor movement.

We have seen above that "practical experience in Russia" also bears this out. Like the Czech separatists, the Bundist separatists have broken with the general Russian Social-Democratic Party. As for the trade unions, the Bundist trade unions, from the outset they were organized on national lines, that is to say, they were cut off from the workers of other nationalities.

Complete segregation and complete rupture – that is what is revealed by the "Russian practical experience" of federalism.

It is not surprising that the effect of this state of affairs upon the workers is to weaken their sense of solidarity and to demoralize them; and the latter process is also penetrating the Bund. We are referring to the increasing collisions between Jewish and Polish workers in connection with unemployment. Here is the kind of speech that was made on this subject at the Ninth Conference of the Bund:

"... We regard the Polish workers, who are ousting us, as pogromists, as scabs; we do not support their strikes, we break them. Secondly, we reply to being ousted by ousting in our turn: we reply to Jewish workers not being allowed into the factories by not allowing Polish workers near the benches.... *If we do not take this matter into our own hands the workers will follow others"* (our italics – *J. St.)*

That is the way they talk about solidarity at a Bundist conference.

You cannot go further than that in the way of "demarcation" and "segregation." The Bund has achieved its aim: it is carrying its demarcation between the workers of different nationalities to the point of conflicts and strike-breaking. And there is no other course: "If we do not take this matter into our own hands *the workers will follow others...."*

Disorganization of the labor movement, demoralization of the Social-Democratic ranks – that is what the federalism of the Bund leads to.

Thus, the idea of cultural-national autonomy, the atmosphere it creates, has proved to be even more harmful in Russia than in Austria.

Chapter 6: The Caucasians, the Conference of the Liquidators

We spoke above of the waverings of one section of the Caucasian Social-Democrats who were unable to withstand the nationalist "epidemic." These waverings were revealed in the fact that, strange as it may seem, the above-mentioned Social-Democrats followed in the footsteps of the Bund and proclaimed cultural-national autonomy.

Regional autonomy for the Caucasus as a whole and cultural-national autonomy for the nations forming the Caucasus – that is the way these Social-Democrats, who, incidentally, are linked with the Russian Liquidators, formulate their demand.

Listen to their acknowledged leader, the not unknown *N.*

"Everybody knows that the Caucasus differs profoundly from the central gubernias, both as regards the racial composition of its population and as regards its territory and agricultural development. The exploitation and material development of such a region require local workers acquainted with local peculiarities and accustomed to the local climate and culture. All laws designed to further the exploitation of the local territory should be issued locally and put into effect by local forces. Consequently, the jurisdiction of the central organ of Caucasian self-government should extend to legislation on local questions.... Hence, the functions of the Caucasian center should consist in the passing of laws designed to further the economic exploitation of the local territory and the material prosperity of the region." [30]

Thus – regional autonomy for the Caucasus.

If we abstract ourselves from the rather confused and incoherent arguments of *N.* , it must be admitted that his conclusion is correct. Regional autonomy for the Caucasus, within the framework of a general state constitution, which *N.* does not deny, is indeed essential because of the peculiarities of its composition and its conditions of life. This was also acknowledged by the Russian Social-Democratic Party, which at its Second Congress proclaimed "regional self-government for those border regions which in respect of their conditions of life and the composition of their population differ from the regions of Russia proper."

When Martov submitted this point for discussion at the Second Congress, he justified it on the grounds that "the vast extent of Russia and the experience of our centralized administration point to the necessity and expediency of regional self-government for such large units as Finland, Poland, Lithuania and the Caucasus."

But it follows that regional *self-government is* to be interpreted as regional *autonomy.*

But *N.* goes further. According to him, regional autonomy for the Caucasus covers "only one aspect of the question."

"So far we have spoken only of the material development of local life. But the economic development of a region is facilitated not only by economic activity but also by spiritual, cultural activity."... "A culturally strong nation is strong also in the economic sphere. "... "But the cultural development of nations is possible only in the national languages."... "Consequently, all questions connected with the native language are questions of national culture. Such are the questions of education! the judicature, the church, literature, art, science, the theatre, etc. If the material development of a region unites nations, matters of national culture disunite them and place each in a separate sphere. Activities of the former kind are associated with a definite territory."... "This is not the case with matters of national culture. These are associated not with a definite territory but with the existence of a definite nation. The fate of the Georgian language interests a Georgian, no

matter where he lives. It would be a sign of profound ignorance to say that Georgian culture concerns only the Georgians who live in Georgia. Take, for instance, the Armenian church. Armenians of various localities and states take part in the administration of its affairs. Territory plays no part here. Or, for instance, the creation of a Georgian museum interests not only the Georgians of Tiflis, but also the Georgians of Baku, Kutais, St. Petersburg, etc. Hence, the administration and control of all affairs of national culture must be left to the nations concerned. we proclaim in favor of cultural-national autonomy for the Caucasian nationalities." [31]

In short, since culture is not territory, and territory is not culture, cultural-national autonomy is required. That is all *N.* can say in the latter's favor.

We shall not stop to discuss again national-cultural autonomy in general; we have already spoken of its objectionable character. We should like to point out only that, while being unsuitable in general, cultural-national autonomy is also meaningless and nonsensical in relation to Caucasian conditions.

And for the following reason:

Cultural-national autonomy presumes more or less developed nationalities, with a developed culture and literature. Failing these conditions, autonomy loses all sense and becomes an absurdity. But in the Caucasus, there are a number of nationalities each possessing a primitive culture, a separate language, but without its own literature; nationalities, moreover, which are in a state of transition, partly becoming assimilated and partly continuing to develop. How is cultural-national autonomy to be applied to them? What is to be done with such nationalities? How are they to be "organized" into separate cultural-national unions, as is undoubtedly implied by cultural-national autonomy?

What is to be done with the Mingrelians, the Abkhasians, the Adjarians, the Svanetians, the Lesghians, and so on, who speak different languages but do not possess a literature of their own? To what nations are they to be

attached? Can they be "organized" into national unions? Around what "cultural affairs" are they to be "organized"?

What is to be done with the Ossetians, of whom the Transcaucasian Ossetians are becoming assimilated (but are as yet by no means wholly assimilated) by the Georgians, while the Cis-Caucasian Ossetians are partly being assimilated by the Russians and partly continuing to develop and are creating their own literature? How are they to be "organized" into a single national union?

To what national union should one attach the Adjarians, who speak the Georgian language, but whose culture is Turkish and who profess the religion of Islam? Shall they be "organized" separately from the Georgians *with regard to religious affairs* and together with the Georgians *with regard to other cultural affairs?* And what about the Kobuletians, the Ingushes, the Inghilois?

What kind of autonomy is that which excludes a whole number of nationalities from the list?

No, that is not a solution of the national question, but the fruit of idle fancy.

But let us grant the impossible and assume that our *N.'s* national-cultural autonomy has been put into effect. Where would it lead to, what would be its results? Take, for instance, the Transcaucasian Tatars, with their minimum percentage of literates, their schools controlled by the omnipotent mullahs and their culture permeated by the religious spirit.... It is not difficult to understand that to "organize" them into a cultural national union would mean to place them under the control of the mullahs, to deliver them over to the tender mercies of the reactionary mullahs, to create a new stronghold of spiritual enslavement of the Tatar masses to their worst enemy.

But since when have Social-Democrats made it a practice to bring grist to the mill of the reactionaries?

Could the Caucasian Liquidators really find nothing better to "proclaim" than the isolation of the Transcaucasian Tatars within a cultural-national union which would place the masses under the thralldom of vicious reactionaries?

No, that is no solution of the national question.

The national question in the Caucasus can be solved only *by drawing the belated nations and nationalities into the common stream of a higher culture.* It is the only progressive solution and the only solution acceptable to Social-Democracy. Regional autonomy in the Caucasus is acceptable because it would draw the belated nations into the common cultural development; it would help them to cast off the shell of small nation insularity; it would impel them forward and facilitate access to the benefits of higher culture. Cultural-national autonomy, however, acts in a diametrically opposite direction, because it shuts up the nations within their old shells, binds them to the lower stages of cultural development and prevents them from rising to the higher stages of culture.

In this way national autonomy counteracts the beneficial aspects of regional autonomy and nullifies it.

That is why the mixed type of autonomy which combines national-cultural autonomy and regional autonomy as proposed by *N* . is also unsuitable. This unnatural combination does not improve matters but makes them worse, because in addition to retarding the development of the belated nations it transforms regional autonomy into an arena of conflict between the nations organized in the national unions.

Thus cultural-national autonomy, which is unsuitable generally, would be a senseless, reactionary undertaking in the Caucasus.

So much for the cultural-national autonomy of *N* . and his Caucasian fellow-thinkers.

Whether the Caucasian Liquidators will take "a step forward" and follow in the footsteps of the Bund on the question of organization also, the future will show. So far, in the history of Social-Democracy federalism in organization always preceded national autonomy in program. The Austrian Social-Democrats introduced organizational federalism as far back as 1897, and it was only two years later (1899) that they adopted national autonomy. The Bundists spoke distinctly of national autonomy for the first time in 1901, whereas organizational federalism had been practiced by them since 1897.

The Caucasian Liquidators have begun from the end, from national autonomy. If they continue to follow in the footsteps of the Bund, they will first have to demolish the whole existing organizational edifice, which was erected at the end of the 'nineties on the basis of internationalism.

But easy though it was to adopt national autonomy, which is still not understood by the workers, it will be difficult to demolish an edifice which it has taken years to build and which has been raised and cherished by the workers of all the nationalities of the Caucasus. This Herostratian undertaking has only to be begun and the eyes of the workers will be opened to the nationalist character of cultural-national autonomy.

While the Caucasians are settling the national question in the usual manner, by means of verbal and written discussion, the All-Russian Conference of the Liquidators has invented a most unusual method. It is a simple and easy method. Listen to this:

"Having heard the communication of the Caucasian delegation to the effect that... it is necessary to demand national-cultural autonomy, this conference, while expressing no opinion on the merits of this demand, declares that such an interpretation of the clause of the program which recognizes the

right of every nationality to self-determination does not contradict the precise meaning of the program."

Thus, first of all they "express no opinion on the merits" of the question, and then they "declare." An original method....

And what does this original conference "declare"?

That the "demand" for national-cultural autonomy "does not contradict the precise meaning "of the program, which recognizes the right of nations to self-determination.

Let us examine this proposition.

The clause on self-determination speaks of the rights of nations. According to this clause, nations have the right not only of autonomy but also of secession. It is a question of *political* self-determination. Whom did the Liquidators want to fool when they endeavored to misinterpret this right of nations to political self-determination, which has long been recognized by the whole of international Social-Democracy?

Or perhaps the Liquidators will try to wriggle out of the situation and defend themselves by the sophism that cultural-national autonomy "does not contradict" the rights of nations? That is to say, if all the nations in a given state agree to arrange their affairs on the basis of cultural-national autonomy, they, the given sum of nations, are fully entitled to do so and nobody may *forcibly impose* a different form of political life on them. This is both new and clever. Should it not be added that, speaking generally, a nation has the right to abolish its own constitution, replace it by a system of tyranny and revert to the old order on the grounds that the nation, and the nation alone, has the right to determine its own destiny? We repeat: in this sense, neither cultural-national autonomy nor any other kind of nationalist reaction "contradicts" *the rights of nations.*

Is that what the esteemed conference wanted to say?

No, not that. It specifically says that cultural-national autonomy "does not contradict," not the rights of nations, but *"the precise meaning" of the program* . The point here is the program and not the rights of nations.

And that is quite understandable. If it were some nation that addressed itself to the conference of Liquidators, the conference might have directly declared that the nation has a right to cultural-national autonomy. But it was not a nation that addressed itself to the conference, but a "delegation" of Caucasian Social-Democrats – bad Social-Democrats, it is true, but Social-Democrats nevertheless. And they inquired not about the rights of nations, but whether cultural-national autonomy contradicted the *principles of Social-Democracy* , whether it did not "contradict" *"the precise meaning" of the program of Social-Democracy.*

Thus, *the rights of nations and "the precise meaning" of the program of Social-Democracy* are not one and the same thing.

Evidently, there are demands which, while they do not contradict the rights of nations, may yet contradict "the precise meaning" of the program.

For example. The program of the Social-Democrats contains a clause on freedom of religion. According to this clause any group of persons *have the right* to profess any religion they please: Catholicism, the religion of the Orthodox Church, etc. Social-Democrats will combat all forms of religious persecution, be it of members of the Orthodox Church, Catholics or Protestants. Does this mean that Catholicism, Protestantism, etc., "do not contradict the precise meaning" of the program? No, it does not. Social-Democrats will always protest against persecution of Catholicism or Protestantism; they will always defend the right of nations to profess any religion they please; but at the same time, on the basis of a correct understanding of the interests of the proletariat, they will carry on agitation

against Catholicism, Protestantism and the religion of the Orthodox Church in order to achieve the triumph of the socialist world outlook.

And they will do so just because there is no doubt that Protestantism, Catholicism, the religion of the Orthodox Church, etc., "contradict the precise meaning" of the program, i.e., the correctly understood interests of the proletariat.

The same must be said of self-determination. Nations have a right to arrange their affairs as they please; they have a right to preserve any of their national institutions, whether beneficial or harmful – nobody can (nobody has a right to!) *forcibly* interfere in the life of a nation. But that does not mean that Social-Democracy will not combat and agitate against the harmful institutions of nations and against the inexpedient demands of nations. On the contrary, it is the duty of Social-Democracy to conduct such agitation and to endeavor to influence the will of nations so that the nations may arrange their affairs in the way that will best correspond to the interests of the proletariat. For this reason, Social-Democracy, while fighting for the right of nations to self-determination, will at the same time agitate, for instance, against the secession of the Tatars, or against cultural-national autonomy for the Caucasian nations; for both, while not contradicting the *rights* of these nations, do contradict *"the precise meaning" of the program*, i.e., the interests of the Caucasian proletariat.

Obviously, "the rights of nations" and the "precise meaning" of the program are on two entirely different planes. Whereas the "precise meaning" of the program expresses the interests of the proletariat, as scientifically formulated in the program of the latter, the rights of nations may express the interests of any class – bourgeoisie, aristocracy, clergy, etc. – depending on the strength and influence of these classes. On the one hand are the *duties* of Marxists, on the other the *rights* of nations, which consist of various classes. The rights of nations and the principles of Social-Democracy may or may not "contradict" each other, just as, say, the pyramid of Cheops may or may not contradict the famous conference of the Liquidators. They are simply not comparable.

But it follows that the esteemed conference most unpardonably muddled two entirely different things. The result obtained was not a solution of the national question but an absurdity, according to which the rights of nations and the principles of Social-Democracy "do not contradict" each other, and, consequently; every demand of a nation may be made compatible with the interests of the proletariat; consequently, no demand of a nation which is striving for self-determination will "contradict the precise meaning" of the program!

They pay no heed to logic....

It was this absurdity that gave rise to the now famous resolution of the conference of the Liquidators which declares that the demand for national-cultural autonomy "does not contradict the precise meaning" of the program.

But it was not only the laws of logic that were violated by the conference of the Liquidators.

By sanctioning cultural-national autonomy it also violated its duty to Russian Social-Democracy. It most definitely did violate "the precise meaning" of the program, for it is well known that the Second Congress, which adopted the program, *emphatically repudiated* cultural-national autonomy. Here is what was said at the congress in this connection:

"Goldblatt (Bundist): ...1 deem it necessary that special institutions be set up to protect the freedom of cultural development of nationalities, and I therefore propose that the following words be added to § 8: *'and the creation of institutions which will guarantee them complete freedom of cultural development.'"* (This, as we know, is the Bund's definition of cultural-national autonomy. – *J. St.*)

"Martynov pointed out that general institutions must be so constituted as to protect particular interests also. It is impossible to create a *special*

institution to guarantee freedom for cultural development of the nationalities.

"Yegorov: On the question of nationality, we can adopt only negative proposals, i.e., we are opposed to all restrictions upon nationality. But we, as Social-Democrats, are not concerned with whether any particular nationality will develop as such. That is a spontaneous process.

"Koltsov: The delegates from the Bund are always offended when their nationalism is referred to. Yet the amendment proposed by the delegate from the Bund is of a purely nationalist character. We are asked to take purely offensive measures in order to support even nationalities that are dying out."

In the end *"Goldblatt's amendment was rejected by the majority, only three votes being cast for it."*

Thus, it is clear that the conference of the Liquidators did "contradict the precise meaning" of the program. It violated the program.

The Liquidators are now trying to justify themselves by referring to the Stockholm Congress, which they allege sanctioned cultural-national autonomy. Thus, V. Kossovsky writes:

"As we know, according to the agreement adopted by the Stockholm Congress, the Bund was allowed to preserve its national program (pending a decision on the national question by a general Party congress). This congress recorded that national-cultural autonomy at any rate does not contradict the general Party program." [32]

But the efforts of the Liquidators are in vain. The Stockholm Congress never thought of sanctioning the program of the Bund – it merely agreed to leave the question open for the time being. The brave Kossovsky did not

have enough courage to tell the whole truth. But the facts speak for themselves. Here they are:

"An amendment was moved by Galin: 'The question of the national program *is left open in view of the fact that it is not being examined* by the congress.' (*For* – 50 votes, *against* – 32.)

"Voice: What does that mean – open?

"Chairman: When we say that the national question is left open, it means that the Bund may maintain its decision on this question until the next congress" [33] (our italics. – *J. St* .).

As you see, the congress even did "not examine" the question of the national program of the Bund – it simply left it "open," leaving the Bund itself to decide the fate of its program until the next general congress met. In other words, the Stockholm Congress avoided the question, expressing no opinion on cultural-national autonomy one way or another.

The conference of the Liquidators, however, most definitely undertakes to give an opinion on the matter, declares cultural-national autonomy to be acceptable, and endorses it in the name of the Party program.

The difference is only too evident.

Thus, in spite of all its artifices, the conference of the Liquidators did not advance the national question a single step.

All it could do was to squirm before the Bund and the Caucasian national-Liquidators.

Chapter 7: The National Question in Russia

It remains for us to suggest a positive solution of the national question.

We take as our starting point that the question can be solved only in intimate connection with the present situation in Russia.

Russia is in a transitional period, when "normal," "constitutional" life has not yet been established and when the political crisis has not yet been settled. Days of storm and "complications" are ahead. And this gives rise to the movement, the present and the future movement, the aim of which is to achieve complete democratization.

It is in connection with this movement that the national question must be examined.

Thus, the complete democratization of the country is the *basis* and condition for the solution of the national question.

When seeking a solution of the question we must take into account not only the situation at home but also the situation abroad. Russia is situated between Europe and Asia, between Austria and China. The growth of democracy in Asia is inevitable. The growth of imperialism in Europe is not fortuitous. In Europe, capital is beginning to feel cramped, and it is reaching out towards foreign countries in search of new markets, cheap labor and new fields of investment. But this leads to external complications and to war. No one can assert that the Balkan War [34] is the end and not the beginning of the complications. It is quite possible, therefore, that a combination of internal and external conditions may arise in which one or another nationality in Russia may find it necessary to raise and settle the question of its independence. And, of course, it is not for Marxists to create obstacles in such cases.

But it follows that Russian Marxists cannot dispense with the right of nations to self-determination.

Thus, *the right of self-determination is an essential element* in the solution of the national question.

Further. What must be our attitude towards nations which for one reason or another will prefer to remain within the framework of the whole?

We have seen that cultural-national autonomy is unsuitable. Firstly, it is artificial and impracticable, for it proposes artificially to draw into a single nation people whom the march of events, real events, is disuniting and dispersing to every corner of the country. Secondly, it stimulates nationalism, because it leads to the viewpoint in favor of the "demarcation" of people according to national curiae, the "organization" of nations, the "preservation" and cultivation of "national peculiarities" – all of which are entirely incompatible with Social-Democracy. It is not fortuitous that the Moravian separatists in the Reichsrat, having severed themselves from the German Social-Democratic deputies, have united with the Moravian bourgeois deputies to form a single, so to speak, Moravian "kolo." Nor is it fortuitous that the separatists of the Bund have got themselves involved in nationalism by acclaiming the "Sabbath" and "Yiddish." There are no Bundist deputies yet in the Duma, but in the Bund area there is a clerical-reactionary Jewish community, in the "controlling institutions" of which the Bund is arranging, for a beginning, a "get-together" of the Jewish workers and bourgeois. Such is the logic of cultural-national autonomy.

Thus, *national* autonomy does not solve the problem.

What, then, is the way out?

The only correct solution is *regional* autonomy, autonomy for such crystallized units as Poland, Lithuania, the Ukraine, the Caucasus, etc.

The advantage of regional autonomy consists, first of all, in the fact that it does not deal with a fiction bereft of territory, but with a definite population inhabiting a definite territory. Next, it does not divide people according to nations, it does not strengthen national barriers; on the contrary, it breaks down these barriers and unites the population in such a manner as to open the way for division of a different kind, division according to classes. Finally; it makes it possible to utilize the natural wealth of the region and to develop its productive forces in the best possible way without awaiting the decisions of a common center – functions which are not inherent features of cultural-national autonomy.

Thus, *regional autonomy is an essential element* in the solution of the national question.

Of course, not one of the regions constitutes a compact, homogeneous nation, for each is interspersed with national minorities. Such are the Jews in Poland, the Letts in Lithuania, the Russians in the Caucasus, the Poles in the Ukraine, and so on. It may be feared, therefore, that the minorities will be oppressed by the national majorities. But there will be grounds for fear only if the old order continues to prevail in the country. Give the country complete democracy and all grounds for fear will vanish.

It is proposed to bind the dispersed minorities into a single national union. But what the minorities want is not an artificial union, but real rights in the localities they inhabit. What can such a union give them *without* complete democratization? On the other hand, what need is there for a national union *when there is* complete democratization?

What is it that particularly agitates a national minority?

A minority is discontented not because there is no national union but because it does not enjoy the right to use its native language. Permit it to use its native language and the discontent will pass of itself.

A minority is discontented not because there is no artificial union but because it does not possess its own schools. Give it its own schools and all grounds for discontent will disappear.

A minority is discontented not because there is no national union, but because it does not enjoy liberty of conscience (religious liberty), liberty of movement, etc. Give it these liberties and it will cease to be discontented.

Thus, *equal rights of nations in all forms (language, schools, etc.) is an essential element* in the solution of the national question. Consequently, a state law based on complete democratization of the country is required, prohibiting all national privileges without exception and every kind of disability or restriction on the rights of national minorities.

That, and that alone, is the real, not a paper guarantee of the rights of a minority.

One may or may not dispute the existence of a logical connection between organizational federalism and cultural-national autonomy. But one cannot dispute the fact that the latter creates an atmosphere favoring unlimited federalism, developing into complete rupture, into separatism. If the Czechs in Austria and the Bundists in Russia began with autonomy, passed to federation and ended in separatism, there can be no doubt that an important part in this was played by the nationalist atmosphere that is naturally generated by cultural-national autonomy. It is not fortuitous that national autonomy and organizational federalism go hand in hand. It is quite understandable. Both demand demarcation according to nationalities. Both presume organization according to nationalities. The similarity is beyond question. The only difference is that in one case the population as a whole is divided, while in the other it is the Social-Democratic workers who are divided.

We know where the demarcation of workers according to nationalities leads to. The disintegration of a united workers' party, the splitting of trade unions

according to nationalities, aggravation of national friction, national strikebreaking, complete demoralization within the ranks of Social-Democracy – such are the results of organizational federalism. This is eloquently borne out by the history of Social-Democracy in Austria and the activities of the Bund in Russia.

The only cure for this is organization on the basis of internationalism.

To unite locally the workers of all nationalities of Russia into *single, integral* collective bodies, to unite these collective bodies into a *single* party – such is the task.

It goes without saying that a party structure of this kind does not preclude, but on the contrary presumes, wide autonomy for the *regions* within the single integral party.

The experience of the Caucasus proves the expediency of this type of organization. If the Caucasians have succeeded in overcoming the national friction between the Armenian and Tatar workers; if they have succeeded in safeguarding the population against the possibility of massacres and shooting affrays; if in Baku, that kaleidoscope of national groups, national conflicts are now no longer possible, and if it has been possible to draw the workers there into the single current of a powerful movement, then the international structure of the Caucasian Social-Democracy was not the least factor in bringing this about.

The type of organization influences not only practical work. It stamps an indelible impress on the whole mental life of the worker. The worker lives the life of his organization, which stimulates his intellectual growth and educates him. And thus, acting within his organization, and continually meeting there, comrades from other nationalities, and side by side with them waging a common struggle under the leadership of a common collective body, he becomes deeply imbued with the idea that workers are *primarily* members of one class family, members of the united army of

socialism. And this cannot but have a tremendous educational value for large sections of the working class.

Therefore, the international type of organization serves as a school of fraternal sentiments and is a tremendous agitational factor on behalf of internationalism.

But this is not the case with an organization on the basis of nationalities. When the workers are organized according to nationality, they isolate themselves within their national shells, fenced off from each other by organizational barriers. The stress is laid not on what is *common* to the workers but on what distinguishes them from each other. In this type of organization, the worker *is primarily* a member of his nation: a Jew, a Pole, and so on. It is not surprising that *national* federalism in organization inculcates in the workers a spirit of national seclusion.

Therefore, the national type of organization is a school of national narrow-mindedness and stagnation.

Thus, we are confronted by two *fundamentally* different types of organization: the type based on international solidarity and the type based on the organizational "demarcation" of the workers according to nationalities.

Attempts to reconcile these two types have so far been vain. The compromise rules of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party drawn up in Wimberg in 1897 were left hanging in the air. The Austrian party fell to pieces and dragged the trade unions with it. "Compromise" proved to be not only utopian, but harmful. Strasser is right when he says that "separatism achieved its first triumph at the Wimberg Party Congress." [35] The same is true in Russia. The "compromise" with the federalism of the Bund which took place at the Stockholm Congress ended in a complete fiasco. The Bund violated the Stockholm compromise. Ever since the Stockholm Congress the Bund has been an obstacle in the way of union of the workers locally in a *single* organization, which would include workers of all nationalities.

And the Bund has obstinately persisted in its separatist tactics in spite of the fact that in 1907 and in 1908 Russian Social-Democracy repeatedly demanded that unity should at last be established. from below among the workers of all nationalities. [36] The Bund, which began with organizational national autonomy, in fact passed to federalism, only to end in complete rupture, separatism. And by breaking with the Russian Social-Democratic Party it caused disharmony and disorganization in the ranks of the latter. Let us recall the Jagiello affair, [37] for instance.

The path of "compromise" must therefore be discarded as utopian and harmful.

One thing or the other: *either* the federalism of the Bund, in which case the Russian Social-Democratic Party must re-form itself on a basis of "demarcation" of the workers according to nationalities; *or* an international type of organization, in which case the Bund must reform itself on a basis of territorial autonomy after the pattern of the Caucasian, Lettish and Polish Social-Democracies, and thus make possible the direct union of the Jewish workers with the workers of the other nationalities of Russia.

There is no middle course: principles triumph, they do not "compromise."

Thus, *the principle of international solidarity of the workers is an essential element* in the solution of the national question.

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[1] Zionism – A reactionary nationalist trend of the Jewish bourgeoisie, which had followers along the intellectuals and the more backward sections of the Jewish workers. The Zionists endeavored to isolate the Jewish working-class masses from the general struggle of the proletariat.

[2] See "Report of the Ninth Conference of the Bund."

[3] See "Announcement of the August Conference."

[4] See "Announcement of the August Conference."

[5] See R. Springer, The National Problem, Obshchestvennaya Polza Publishing House, 1909, p. 43.

[6] See O. Bauer, The National Question and Social-Democracy, Serp Publishing House, 1909.

[7] See his Der Arbeiter und die Nation, 1912.

[8] South-Slav Social-Democracy operates in the Southern part of Austria.

[9] See V. Kossovsky, Problems of Nationality, 1907.

[10] The Brünn Parteitag, or Congress, of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party was held on September 24-29, 1899. The resolution on the national question adopted by this congress is quoted by J. V. Stalin in the chapter IV, "Cultural-National Autonomy."

[11] See Springer, The National Problem.

[12] "Thank God we have no parliament here" – the words uttered by V. Kokovtsev, tsarist Minister of Finance (later Prime Minister), in the State Duma on April 24 1908.

[13] The representatives of the South-Slav Social-Democratic Party also voted for it. See Discussion of the National Question at the Brünn Congress, 1906.

[14] In M. Panin's Russian translation (see his translation of Bauer's book), "national individualities" is given in place of "national peculiarities." Panin translated this passage incorrectly. The word "individuality" is not in the German text, which speaks of nationalen Eigenart, i.e., peculiarities, which is far from being the same thing.

[15] Verhandlungen des Gesamtparteitages in Brünn, 1899.

[16] See Proceedings of the Brünn Social-Democratic Party Congress.

[17] See Chapter II of the Manifesto of the Communist Party by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

[18] The Vienna Congress (or Wimberg Congress – after the name of the hotel in which it met) of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party was held June 6-12 1897.

[19] The reference is to an article by Karl Marx entitled "Zur Judenfrage" ("The Jewish Question"), published in 1844 in the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher.

[20] See K. Kautsky, "The Kishinev Pogrom and the Jewish Question," 1903.

[21] See Forms of the National Movement, etc., edited by Kastelyansky.

[22] See Minutes of the Second Congress.

[23] The Eighth Congress of the Bund was held in September 1910 in Lvov.

[24] Report of the Eighth Conference of the Bund, 1911, p. 62.

[25] In an article entitled "Another Splitters' Conference," published in the newspaper Za Partiyu, October 2 (15) 1912, G. V. Plekhanov condemned the "August" Conference of the Liquidators and described the stand of the Bundists and Caucasian Social-Democrats as an adaptation of socialism to nationalism. Kossovsky, leader of the Bundists, criticized Plekhanov in a letter to the Liquidators' magazine Nasha Zarya.

[26] See Concerning National Autonomy and the Reorganizatzon of Russian Social-Democracy on a Federal Basis, 1902, published by the Bund.

[27] Nashe Slovo, No. 3, Vilno, 1906, p. 24.

[28] Iskra (The Spark) – The first all-Russian illegal Marxist newspaper founded by V. I. Lenin in 1900.

[29] See the words quoted from a brochure by Karl Vanek in Dokumente des Separatismus, p. 29. Karl Vanek was a Czech Social-Democrat who took an openly chauvinist and separatist stand.

[30] See the Georgian newspaper Chveni Tskhovreba (Our Life), No. 12, 1912. Chveni Tskhovreba was a daily paper published by the Georgian Mensheviks in Kutais from July 1 to 22 1912.

[31] See the Georgian newspaper Chveni Tskhovreba, No. 12, 1912.

[32] Nasha Zarya, No. 9-10, 1912, p. 120.

[33] See Nashe SIovo, No. 8, 1906, p. 53.

[34] The reference is to the first Balkan War, which broke out in October 1912 between Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Montenegro on the one hand, and Turkey on the other.

[35] See his Der Arbeiter und die Nation, 1912.

[36] See the resolutions of the Fourth (the "Third All-Russian") Conference of the R.S.D.L.P., held November 5-12 1907, and of the Fifth (the "All-Russian 1908") Conference of the R.S.D.L.P., held December 21-27 1908 (January 3-9 1909). (See Resolutions and Decisions of the C.P.S.U.(B.) Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums, Vol. 1, 6th Russ. ed., 1940, pp. 118-31.)

[37] E. J. Jagiello – A member of the Polish Socialist Party (P.P.S.) was elected to the Fourth State Duma for Warsaw as a result of a bloc formed by the Bund, the Polish Socialist Party and the bourgeois nationalists against the Polish Social-Democrats. By a vote of the seven Menshevik Liquidators against the six Bolsheviks, the Social-Democratic group in the Duma adopted a resolution that Jagiello be accepted as a member of the group.